The FUTURE of Role Playing

Avalon Hill: War Games With A Vengeance!

GAME PLAYERS

PC Entertainment™

PC PINBALL: The Next Generation

OVER 35 Games Reviewed

HOT TITLES!

Lands of Lore
Seal Team
Warlords II
Gary Grigsby's War in Russia

Hit The Road With SAM & MAX

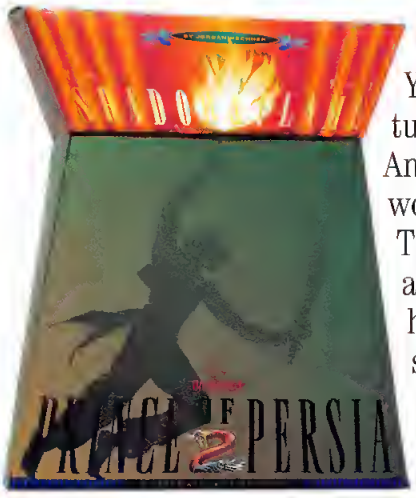
It's OK, Ma'am We're Freelance Police

Tornado
Street Fighter II
NHL Hockey
Wing Commander Academy

$3.95 U.S and CANADA Vol 6 No.6
Display Until Jan. 4, 1994
06
0 09281 01095 1

Bad Day in Bagdad!





You've been cast out of the palace as a beggar. The princess has turned against you. The palace guards want your head on a skewer. And you haven't even had breakfast yet. This is not good. It gets worse. One minute you're fleeing for your very life across roof tops. The next, you find yourself washed up on a desert island...or amidst ancient ruins, face to face with a disembodied head (and boy is it hungry!). This is *really* not good. You stumble upon quicksand, serpents, spikes, magic spells, a skeleton with a sick sense of humor, and then...well...things get just a mite tricky. Introducing *Prince of Persia 2®: The Shadow & the Flame™*. Some call it a dozen Arabian Nights movies rolled into one. Actually, it's your worst Arabian nightmare. So get some sleep. Once this swashbuckler begins, you may never sleep again.

Broderbund®

PULSE-QUICKENING ACTION • RICH MOVIE-LIKE STORY AND SOUNDTRACK • INCREDIBLY REALISTIC ANIMATION

A CINEMATIC ACTION GAME BY JORDAN MECHNER • SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE $69.95 (MS-DOS VERSION). SEE YOUR LOCAL DEALER OR CALL **1-800- 521-6263** AND REFER TO CODE 264 TO ORDER AT A 25% SAVINGS • REQUIRES 10 MHZ 286 OR FASTER MACHINE. HARD DRIVE AND VGA REQUIRED

©1993 Brøderbund Software, Inc. Prince of Persia is a registered trademark and The Shadow & the Flame is a trademark of Brøderbund Software. All rights reserved

Product Information Number 110

IN CYBERSTRIKE, ALL BEGINNERS WILL BE TREATED FAIRLY.

AND THEN DESTROYED.

Beaten all the boxed games? Done the arcades to death? Try CyberStrike,™ the wild new multi-player game on GEnie where you hop into a two-legged CyberPod and battle it out against other real live humans for control of a virtual reality city. The action's fast and furious. But even if you're new in town, you won't get blown to Kingdom Come. Well, not right away at least. In fact, CyberStrike is so easy to learn, you might actually live long enough to waste someone else first. And best of all, it only costs three bucks an hour.* So strap yourself inside a Pod and come out shooting. You've got nothing to lose. Except your life.



GEnie®
multi-player games
100% ORGANIC OPPONENTS

SIGN UP NOW: 1. Set your modem for half duplex (local echo) at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. 2. Dial toll free 1-800-638-8369. Upon connection, enter HHH 3. At the U # = prompt, enter XKY95112,DESTROY then press RETURN 4. Have a major credit card or your checking account number ready. For more information in the U.S. or Canada, call 1-800-638-9636.

*Here's the fine print. GEnie multi-player games and support services are $3.00 an hour in non-prime time: 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. local time Mon.-Fri., all day Sat. and Sun. and selected holidays. There's also an $8.95 monthly subscription fee. Each month, you'll get credit for up to four hours of non-prime time usage. Any surcharges incurred apply to all hourly usage, including your first four hours.

SIMUTRONICS CORPORATION

Product Information Number 162

CONTENTS


26


36


89


62


54

DEPARTMENTS

4
EDITOR'S NOTES

8
MEGA BYTES
PC Gaming News and Trends

16
GAMEBYTES
*B-Ball, Gold*Juno*Sword, Brix, Crime City, Dr. T's Sing-A-Long, Crosswire*

FEATURES

22
SAM AND MAX HIT THE ROAD
They're Sam & Max, Freelance Police. A big canine gumshoe and a gaunt, razor-toothed rabbit. Scott Wolf introduces you to LucasArts' new crime-fighting duo — and we promise no one will get hurt.

26
BACK WITH A VENGEANCE
Avalon Hill, the company that launched the wargaming craze back in the 1950s, is gearing up for a second assault on the PC gaming market. Here's a look at what we can expect from the company that made waging war an acceptable hobby.

30
TOMORROW'S GAMES TODAY: THE UNDERGROUND DEMO SCENE
Right now, gangs of young cyberpunks are roaming the Internet. Using names like Future Crew, Silents, and Toxic Zombies, these talented hackers are programming the future. This is what it'll look like.

36
IT'S NOT JUST FOR KIDS ANYMORE
Four new pinball simulations bring a classic American pastime into the high-tech limelight.

COLUMNS

42
ALTERNATE LIVES
Most of today's role-playing games are basically designed the way they were 5 or 10 years ago. It's time for a change — but what's the right direction?

44
EXTENDED PLAY
MiG-29: Deadly Adversary of Falcon 3.0 makes an already exciting sim even more intriguing.

48
THE DESKTOP GENERAL
Gary Grigsby's obsession with the Russian Front campaigns of WWII culminates with *War in Russia*, his magnum opus. According to William Trotter, this is Grigsby's finest effort yet.

REVIEWS

54
SEAL TEAM

56
TORNADO

60
GATEWAY II: HOMEWORLD

62
WARLORDS II

66
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT 2

70
ASHES OF EMPIRE

74
WHEN TWO WORLDS WAR

76
SHADOW OF THE COMET

80
LANDS OF LORE

84
SIM FARM

89
WING COMMANDER ACADEMY

90
ARMOUR-GEDDON

92
STRONGHOLD

94
PETER PAN

98
COHORT II

100
NHL HOCKEY

101
STREET FIGHTER II

102
SLATER & CHARLIE GO CAMPING

103
BLOODSTONE: AN EPIC DWARVEN TALE

104
THE LOST VIKINGS

BUY THE BEST OF '93*

And get the best of '91 & '92 *FREE*

***As Chosen by Computer Gaming World & PC Games**

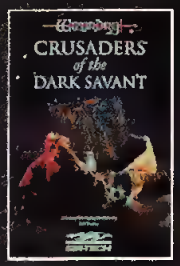
OVER 4.6 MILLION SOLD

Wizardry® TRILOGY 2

WIZARDRY V, VI & VII

Winner of over 15 International Awards

WIZARDRY, the game that pioneered first-person perspective & defined computer role-playing for more than a decade. Now, the award-winning WIZARDRY V, VI & VII are available in 1 complete package, at 1 incredible price. Three best selling games, with over 500 hours of engaging, replayable adventure, come to you with a savings of 25% off individual suggested retail prices.

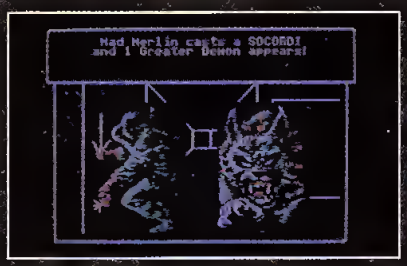












CRUSADERS OF THE DARK SAVANT
REDEFINING ROLE-PLAYING FOR AN ENTIRE INDUSTRY

1993 **ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF THE YEAR**
COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

1992 Fantasy Role-Playing Game of the Year
PC Games

1992 Role-Playing Game of the Year
Strategy Plus Magazine

BANE OF THE COSMIC FORGE
PAVING THE WAY FOR THE SYSTEMS OF THE FUTURE

1991 Best Game of the Year
Strategy Plus Magazine

1991 Best Role-Playing Game of the Year
Strategy Plus Magazine

1991 Top Role-Playing Game, April 1991
Computer Gaming World

THE LEGACY OF HEART OF THE MAELSTROM
BREAKING AWAY FROM THE WIZARDRY SYSTEM OF THE PAST

THE WIZARDRY TRILOGY
Scenarios I, II & III

The original classics that set the trend in fantasy role-playing are now available at a new low price!

SIR-TECH

Ogdensburg Business Center, P.O. Box 245
Ogdensburg, NY 13669 (315) 393-6633
FAX# (315) 393-1525

Available at a software retailer near you, or call:

(800) 447-1230

Product Information Number 111

EDITOR'S NOTES

It seems that a lot of folks, including some members of the press, have sort of missed the boat on what CD-ROM technology can and can't do, and what it all means for the PC gaming industry and for you, the consumer.

Six years ago, the average PC was an 8088 with two low-density floppy drives. Not many had hard drives. When the 286 became the standard, game developers began to take advantage of the chip's new speed and power, and that meant bigger games — games so big they had to be put on a hard drive. Publishers still put out games that could be played straight from a floppy, but who wanted to sit around swapping disks all day?

With the arrival of the 386, game programs became *really* big — so big that to offer them on low-density disks would mean a package with 20 disks or more. Publishers needed a more efficient delivery system, and chose high-density disks to get their products to market. So high-density disk drives became the standard, and today we take them for granted.

Now, as games approach 30 MB and even 40 MB in size, it's time for a new delivery system. And that's really *all* CD-ROM is. It's a delivery system — an enormous new floppy drive—that gives today's game developers the room to create bigger, more innovative titles without the high costs and artificial limits imposed by the floppy disk. Once, designers had to cut game features to keep their programs within an acceptable size range. Not anymore.

But if you read some PC gaming mags, you might get the idea that CD-ROM games aren't still PC games. That's ridiculous! It's like saying a PC game played from disk is different from the same game installed on your hard drive. It's just not true — the only difference is in the time it takes for the program to access data. Any CD-ROM title on the market today *could* have been compressed and shipped on high-density floppies. But it might take hundreds of floppies to hold it all — not to mention the hundreds of MB of free hard disk space you'd need to install it.

Sure, CD-ROM games are big. But they're still PC games — in fact, they're the *future* of PC games. More and more, we'll see games shipped on CD-ROM simply because its low cost and high capacity make it the best delivery system available, even for games that could be shipped on floppies.

Today, a CD-ROM drive will enhance your PC; tomorrow, it will be a necessity.

— Stephen Poole
Editor

Game Players PC Entertainment (ISSN-1059-2180) is published bimonthly by GP Publications, Inc., 23-00 Route 208, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410, USA. Second-class postage paid at Greensboro, NC, and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by the Curtis Circulation Company. Subscriptions: One year (6 issues) US: $14.95, Canada $22.42. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST #128220688). Outside US and Canada: Add $2.00 per issue.
For customer service, write Game Players Customer Service Dept., 23-00 Route 208, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410. Postmaster please send change of address to *Game Players PC Entertainment*, 23-00 Route 208, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410.

Corporate, advertising sales, and circulation offices: 23-00 Route 208, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410. Phone: (201) 703-9500, FAX: (201) 703-9509. Editorial and production offices: 300-A S. Westgate Drive, Greensboro, NC 27407. Phone: (919) 852-6711; FAX: (919) 632-1165. Editorial product information should be addressed to Editor, Game Players PC Entertainment, P.O. Box 29364, Greensboro, NC 27429.
Overnight delivery parcels should be addressed to Game Players, 300-A S. Westgate Drive, Greensboro, NC 27407. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned or acknowledged. GP Publications, Inc., also publishes *Game Players Nintendo Sega, CD-ROM Today, The Magazine of Personal Multimedia, Computer Entertainment News*, and *Game Players Encyclopedias* covering Nintendo, Sega, and PC games.

Entire contents copyright 1993, GP Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Game Players, Game Players Guide, and Game Players Encyclopedia are tradenames of GP Publications, Inc. Products named in these pages are tradenames or trademarks of their respective companies. GP Publications, Inc., is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in *Game Players PC Entertainment*.
Produced in U.S.A.

GAME PLAYERS PC Entertainment

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1993

EDITOR, Stephen Poole
SENIOR EDITOR, Matthew A. Firme
PUBLISHER, Michael J. Romano
ART DIRECTOR, Edwin C. Malstrom
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR, Hudson Best
ASSISTANT EDITOR, Phill Powell

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Lee Buchanan, Leslie Eiser,
T. Liam McDonald,
Gary Meredith, Phill Powell
Neil Randall, Jeff Seiken,
William R. Trotter, Bernie Yee

GP PUBLICATIONS, INC.
EDITORIAL, ART, PRODUCTION, MARKETING
300-A S. Westgate Drive
Greensboro, NC 27407
Phone: (919) 852-6711
Fax: (919) 632-1165

EXECUTIVE EDITOR, Selby Bateman
SENIOR ART & DESIGN DIRECTOR, Amy L. Pruette
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, Lance Elko
MANAGING EDITOR, Gary James
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR, Irma Swain
MARKETING MANAGER, Kathleen Ingram
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR, Pamela Lambert

SALES AND CIRCULATION
23-00 Route 208
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
Phone: (201) 703-9500
Fax: (201) 703-9509
DIRECTOR OF CONSUMER MARKETING, Maryanne Napoli
SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER, Lori Coppin

ADVERTISING

EAST
Peter Mayer
(201) 703-9500
Fax: (201) 703-9509

MIDWEST
Norman Kamikow
(312) 664-7878
Fax: (312) 664-0714

WEST
Ed Winchell
Pacific Media Sales, Inc.
Northwest
(408) 438-5654
Fax: (408) 438-8999
Southwest
(310) 372-6858
Fax: (310) 372-8175

Please send all advertising materials to Pamela Lambert, Production Coordinator, *PC Entertainment*, 300-A South Westgate Drive, Greensboro, NC 27407.

GP PUBLICATIONS, INC. - CORPORATE
CEO, Gerry L. Hansen
PRESIDENT, Anthony G. Todd
VP/OPERATIONS & CFO, Tom Valentino

INTERACTIVE HORROR MOVIE

HERE NO ONE RESTS IN PEACE.



Over 90 minutes of captivating video and an original gothic soundtrack draws you into the center of the action.



Over 150 riveting scenes propel you down multiple pathways toward the final confrontation.



Unique interactive experience that you've never encountered before.

Dracula is back, driven by revenge and a hunger for human blood. Follow a trail of vampire brides, corpses, and wolf tracks through the streets of London. You direct the drama, suspense, and passion as you are drawn into a world of evil where every decision and action you make is inextricably tied to the fates of those you love.

From the creators of Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective™

Dracula UNLEASHED™

VIACOM® NEW MEDIA

Contact your local retailer or call 1-800-877-4266.

Product Information Number 137

© 1993, Viacom New Media. All Rights Reserved. Consulting Detective is a licensed trademark of Sleuth Productions, LTD. Dracula Unleashed is a Trademark of Viacom New Media.

AVAILABLE ON CD-ROM FOR PC AND MAC



SURROUNDED BY ANTI-AIRCRAFT. HUNTED BY SAMS. EVEN MACH 2 ISN'T FAST ENOUGH. IT'S A STORY CAPTAIN DEAN PENNINGTON DIDN'T THINK HE'D LIVE TO TELL. WOULD YOU?

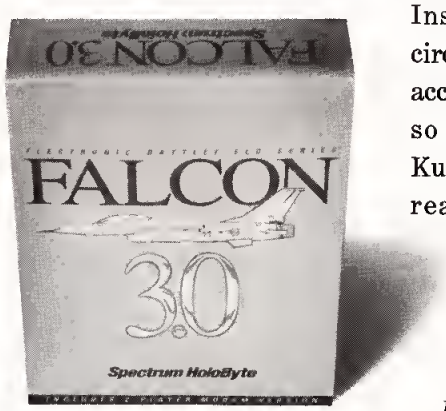


A TRUE STORY

Kuwait, May 23, 1991. Captain Dean "D-Dawg" Pennington dives to take out an Iraqi 85mm gun emplacement below. "Flares, break left!" his wingman screams. He wrenches the stick just as a SAM explodes 10 feet behind his F-16. Anti-aircraft batteries now open up all around, engulfing him. Too low to avoid the anti-aircraft, too slow to evade another SAM, he's faced with a hopeless choice and less than a quarter of a second to make it. Lighting afterburners, he rockets to safety before they can lock on again.

THE STANDARD BY WHICH OTHER FIGHTERS ARE JUDGED

Captain Pennington survived on skill, nerve and the awesome capabilities of the F-16 Fighting Falcon. Nothing, aside from a true F-16, captures the "hair-on-fire" feeling of flying America's most deadly fighter like *Falcon® 3.0,* Spectrum HoloByte's computer simulation.



A HIGHER LEVEL OF FLIGHT

Unlike some sims, which more closely simulate the arcade experience than the flying one, *Falcon 3.0* features a depth of play that almost rivals real life. Like real pilots, you'll fly with a wingman, allowing you to engage in aerial tactics like bracket maneuvers. Instead of enemies who fly in circles, *Falcon 3.0* adversaries fly according to true fighter doctrine so they're no pushovers. And Kuwait looks like Kuwait since real geographic theaters are faithfully mapped.

With Falcon 3.0, up to six players can go mano a mano. May the best man win.

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE HEAD 2 HEAD

NOT JUST A SIMULATION OF A WARPLANE A SIMULATION OF WAR

Falcon 3.0 lets you fight as part of an entire campaign. The missions you fly play a crucial role in your side's success. But they're not hard-wired. Each result affects the overall war effort—and determines your next mission. Succeed



For Visa/MasterCard orders call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: (800) 695-GAME.
For technical questions call (510) 522-1164 (M-F: 9AM-5PM Pacific Time).



©1993 Spectrum HoloByte, Inc. All rights reserved. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

and go on to hit the enemy in his own backyard. Fail and find the bad guys breathing down your neck.

FALCON 3.0 vs. MiG-29



Electronic Battlefield Series simulations link up. So you don't just choose your mission, you choose your aircraft. Care to fly for the other side, comrade?

THE ELECTRONIC BATTLEFIELD SERIES: THE ULTIMATE CYBER-BATTLEFIELD

Choose from multiple aircraft, multiple theaters, even which side of the conflict to fight on. Go head-to-head over a modem or with up to six players over a network. It's possible because each *Electronic Battlefield Series* title works with the others, from *MiG-29*™ to the upcoming F/A-18 simulation. There's even a multimedia guide to air-to-air combat called *Art of the Kill*™ to help you fly like an ace. It all starts with *Falcon 3.0.*

The simulation for people who want to fly the not-so-friendly skies.

Spectrum HoloByte



ELECTRONIC BATTLEFIELD SERIES

The fight of your life.

Product Information Number 112

ON THE BOARDS

A new information network is being positioned as a low-cost alternative to existing on-line services. **Concentric Research Corp.** has unveiled its *CRIS Information and Entertainment Network*, which offers the standard set of services (E-mail, bulletin boards, forums, teleconferencing, etc.), but at cheaper rates than those asked by the dominant networks. Additionally, CRC is working on *CRIS II*, a data network specializing in cutting-edge developments like video and audio on-demand and interactive, graphical-based games. (Concentric Research Corp., 406 North Jackson, Bay City, MI 48708. (800) 745-CRIS.)

Galacticomm is inviting you to join the global electronic village. Its new *Guide to Public Online Services* is a directory of online services throughout the U.S. and Canada. Diversity is the key here, with listings as varied as Horse-Net and Real Estate Online. Some of the systems charge for online time, but almost all of them offer free demos so you can see what you're getting. The *Guide* price is right, too — free with a call to Galacticomm at (800) 328-1128. (Galacticomm, Inc., 4101 SW 47th Ave., Suite 101, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314.)

Square Off shares some similarities with TV game shows beyond its catchy title. **Prodigy's** first math game resembles "Jeopardy!" with numbers. In the first part of the game, players are given a certain sum, and then must create an equation that will yield that sum. In the second part of *Square Off*, players plug in missing parts of equations. High scores are posted weekly on Prodigy and are fed into an all-time high score list. To hear more, contact your nearest Prodigy dealer by calling 1-800-PRODIGY. (Prodigy Services Company, 445 Hamilton Ave., White Plains, NY 10601. 1-800-PRODIGY.)

NEW HARDWARE AND GAMING PERIPHERALS

Sierra On-Line has announced its support for **Advanced Gravis'** *Gravis UltraSound*. Sierra is listing drivers on its bulletin board ((209) 683-4463) that *UltraSound* owners can use with 15 of Sierra's latest games. *Gravis UltraSound* incorporates wave-table synthesis in which real sounds are recorded and sampled, as opposed to the artificially generated sounds of FM synthesis. (Advanced Gravis, 101-3750 North Fraser Way, Burnaby, B.C., Canada V5J 5E9 (604) 431-5020.)



Parallel Game Port

Xing Technology has produced an encoder that provides 30 frames-per-second video capturing and uses MPEG compression standards. *XingIt!* retails for $795 and was developed jointly by Xing and Philips Semiconductors. The encoder accepts NTSC, PAL, or SECAM formats and produces real-time play back in a 320 x 240 window. System requirements call for an IBM 386, Windows 3.1, and 2 MB of RAM. Xing also makes *Picture Prowler*, an image-management software utility that **Sigma Designs** is bundling with its *WinMovie* video capture controller. (Xing Technology Corporation, 1540 West Branch Street, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420 (805) 473-0145.)

Speaking of Sigma, the company's *ReelMagic* card combines a full-motion video playback controller with a 16-bit sound card. The controller uses MPEG standards, and a VGA feature connector supplies the video output with over 32,000 colors, even when using a standard 16 color VGA card. Street prices for *ReelMagic* should run around $400. (Sigma Designs, Inc., 47900 Bayside Parkway, Fremont, CA 94538 (510) 770-0100.)

Portable computers have presented a significant problem for flight sim enthusiasts — there's no place to plug in a joystick. But **Genovation** has come up with an answer for everyone sick of piloting with a mouse or keyboard controls. The *Parallel Game Port* contains transitional software and a gender-changer adapter. The joystick's key switches can be reprogrammed to suit the individual player, and an optional port doubler cable allows a second joystick to be installed. (Genovation, Inc., 17741 Mitchell, North, Irvine, CA 92714 (714) 833-3355.)



ReelMagic

IMAGINE A GAMING DEVICE SO INTUITIVE IT'S LIKE NOT HAVING ONE AT ALL.



CyberMan
THE MOST ADVANCED WAY TO MASTER 3-D GAMES.

Now moving in a game is as easy as thinking about it. Only CyberMan moves in three directions (x, y, and z) and three rotations (pitch, yaw, and roll), which correlate directly to your moves inside a 3-D game; your intuitive movements translate literally to the screen. It's also the only controller with tactile feedback that makes you a physical part of the game. CyberMan is available now at your local dealer, or call **1-800-732-2936**.

Product Information Number 216

LOGITECH

The Senseware™ Company

™ Trademarks belong to their registered owners.

NEW AND UPCOMING RELEASES

Accolade has inked a multi-year agreement with the National Football League Players Association and has incorporated actual NFL stats into *Unnecessary Roughness*, an upcoming football sim the company promises will be "graphically intensive and aggressive." *Unnecessary Roughness* will sport a multiple perspective feature with infinite camera views, SVGA graphics, and the play-by-play commentary of Al Michaels. Look for *Unnecessary Roughness* late this fall. (Accolade, 5300 Stevens Creek Blvd., San Jose, CA 95129. (408) 985-1700.)



Unnecessary Roughness

HPS Simulations has announced two *Aide De Camp* developments. First, HPS is assembling a database for wargamers who use the board-to-computer game conversion program. Once ADC owners are registered in the Opponents Wanted database, they'll receive the names and addresses of players who share their tastes in board games. Registration forms are included in every ADC game and can also be downloaded from GEnie and National Videotel Network. On the other ADC front, **Decision Games** will create and market ADC add-on disks tailored to accommodate Decision's board war-games. The disks will shorten the process whereby players enter map and symbol sets. (HPS Simulations, P.O. Box 3245, Santa Clara, CA 95055-3245. (408)554-8381.)

And Shift and stretch and Alt and bend: Computer jockeys whose only exercise is Typing in Place might want to check out **Hopkins Technology**'s *ExerciseBreak*. The idea behind the software is to minimize repetitive-motion injuries by performing simple exercises while seated at the computer. *ExerciseBreak* automatically pops-up on your computer monitor at preset intervals, and coaches you through a mini-routine. There are over 50 exercises (70 illustrations in all) from which to customize an individual regimen. *ExerciseBreak* is currently available; for more information call 612-931-9376. (Hopkins Technology, 421 Hazel Lane, Hopkins, MN 55343.)

MicroLeague Interactive is bundling two sports games together in one package, called the *Pro Pak*. For $49.95, players receive *MicroLeague Baseball 4* and *MicroLeague Football 2*. Both games let you coach Hall of Fame greats from the past, and use actual statistics. If you're interested only in football, *MicroLeague Football: The Coach's Challenge* is being included as part of a combo package — floppy-disk manufacturer **TDK**, in conjunction with MicroLeague, is offering the game with packages of their blank computer disks. (Micro-League Interactive Software, 262 Chapman Road, Newark, DE 19702. (302) 368-9990.)

Have you ever been...to *Electric Reading Land*? **D.C. True** has, and it has launched an early learning product series called The Jimi Learning Experience. The first installment, *Electric Reading Land*, strives to make learning fun for kids and parents. The program contains a time-traveling spaceship theme for children ages 4 to 7, and '60's music for Mom and Dad. And in a laudable move, D.C. True is donating a five percent royalty from sales of *Electric Reading Land*, as well as free software, to "Software for Success," a non-profit corporation endeavoring to put software within reach of economically disadvantaged youngsters. (D.C. True, Ltd., 1840 Oak Ave., Evanston, IL 60201. (708) 866-1864.)

Doodle-mation is the first product released by Maxis affiliate **ScreenMagic**. Billed as "the doodle pad for the Electronic Age," *Doodle-mation* lets you create Spirograph-like drawings by choosing shapes and colors, and coupling them with patterns and rotations. Particularly pleasing doodles can be saved as Windows wallpaper or custom-made Screen Savers. (ScreenMagic, 820 Florida St., San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 648-8056.)

In order to properly run the SuperJAM! Free-for-All disk, you must have a Windows 3.1-compatible soundcard or MIDI instrument. Complete details, including odds of winning, types of prizes and value of prizes to be included on Free-for-All disk.

Only one SuperJAM! Free-for-All disk and prize per household. Winning disk subject to verification. This promotion not open to anyone associated with The Blue Ribbon SoundWorks, Ltd. ("Blue Ribbon"), including employees and their families.

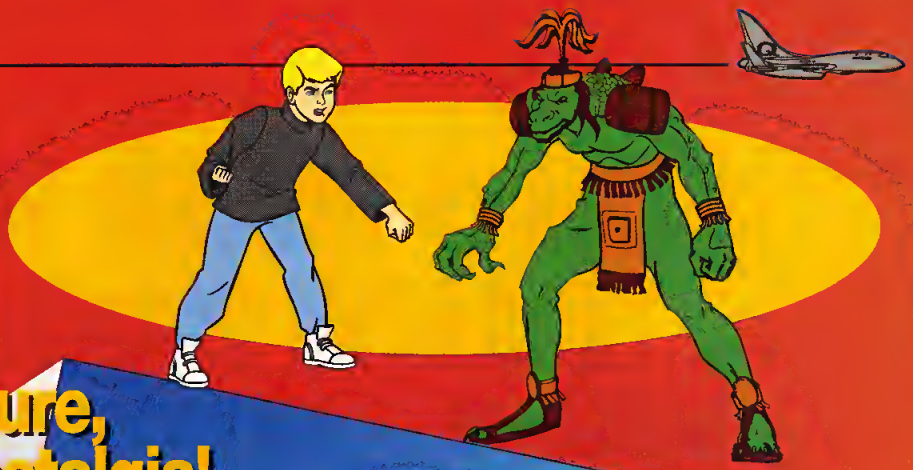
any tampering of a SuperJAM! Free-for-All disk, including duplication and/or electronic transmission or transfer thereof, disqualifies you or any recipients of tampered or transferred disk from receiving a prize. The decision of Blue Ribbon in this regard will be final. Blue Ribbon reserves the right to limit the number of disks available through this promotion. "Windows" is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation. SuperJAM! is a trademark of The Blue Ribbon SoundWorks, Ltd.



Product Information Number 141



"Nothing will stop me this time!!"



Action, Adventure, Danger and Nostalgia!

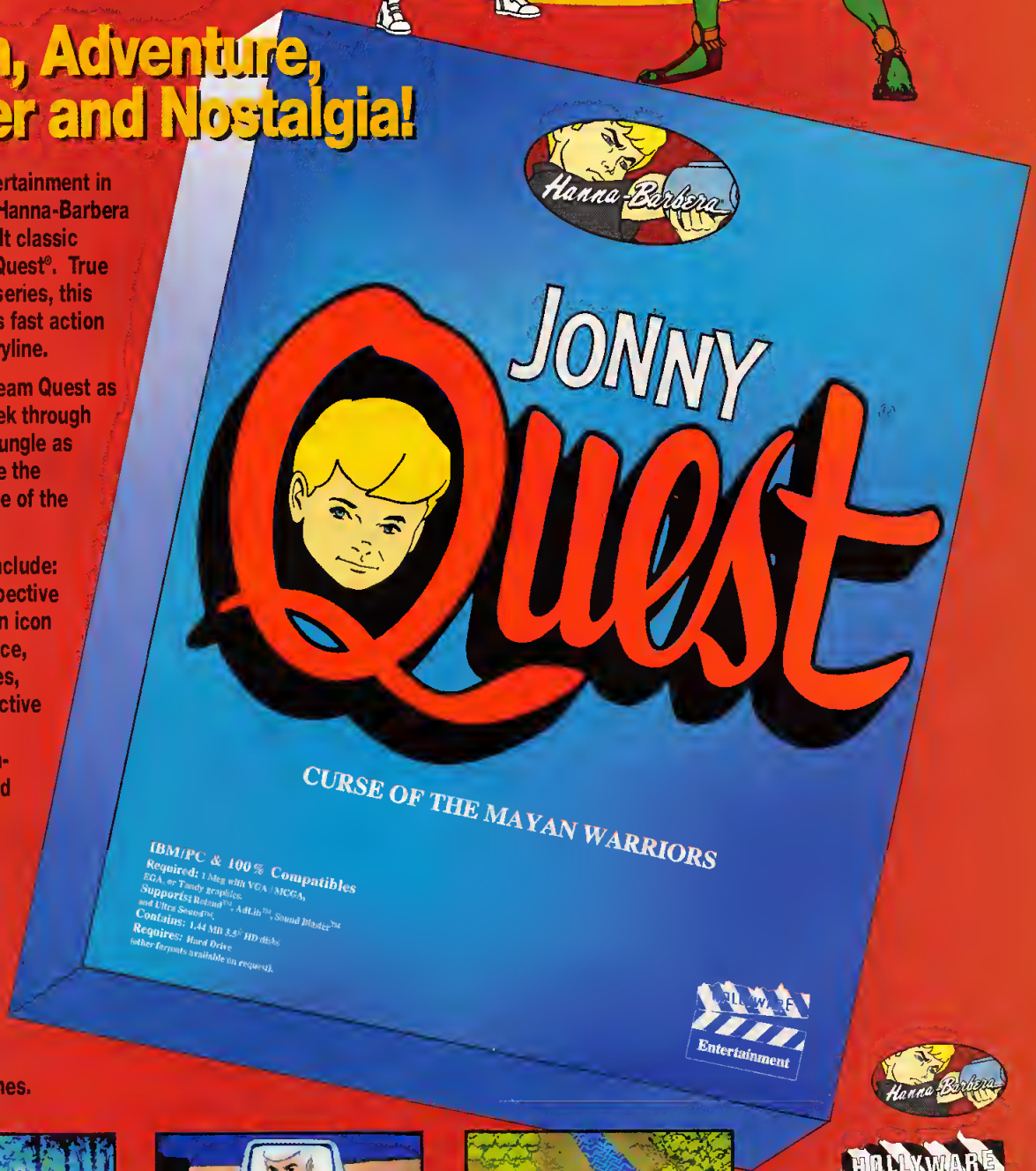
HOLLYWARE Entertainment in association with Hanna-Barbera bring you the "cult classic cartoon", Jonny Quest®. True to the television series, this game emphasizes fast action and a unique storyline.

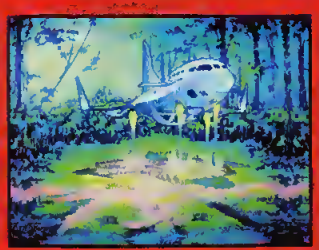
Join Jonny and Team Quest as they fearlessly trek through the Guatemalan jungle as they seek to solve the mysterious "Curse of the Mayan Warrior".

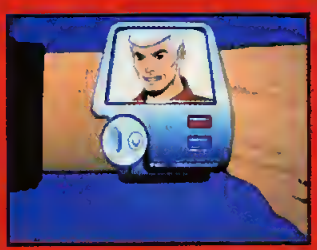
Game Features include: A 3D raised perspective for exploration, an icon controlled interface, combat sequences, full cast of interactive characters, a full sound track, stunning graphics, and literally hours of entertainment.

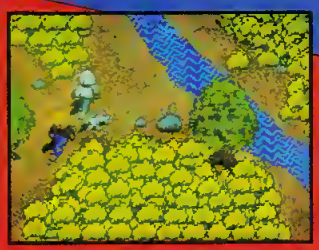
Available for IBM PC and compatible machines.

Check your local retail stores for Gear Works and other HOLLYWARE Games.









Hanna-Barbera

HOLLYWARE Entertainment

HOLLYWARE ENTERTAINMENT
P.O. Box 9148 Marina Del Rey, Ca. 90295
(310) 822-9200

Copyright © 1993 HOLLYWARE Entertainment. Copyright © 1993 Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc. See your Local Software Retailer or call HOLLYWARE Entertainment.
Product Information Number 130

SUMO HEAD BUTTS, SONIC BOOMS, WHIRLWIND KICKS, DRAGON PUNCHES, BUTT CRUSHES, FIREBALLS, SPINNING PILEDRIVERS










Street Fighter II™ is a registered trademark of Capcom Co , Ltd.

WILL YOUR PC SURVIVE? WILL YOU?



STREET FIGHTER II™

FOR THE PC

CAPCOM®

Distributed by **Hi Tech Expressions**

Available at your local software retailer
or call 1-800-447-6543 to order by
MC/VISA/AMEX

Product Information Number 134

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Two substantial entertainment companies have made hefty investments in **Crystal Dynamics**: Home Box Office (HBO) and King World Productions, perhaps best known as the syndicators of TV's "Jeopardy!" "Wheel of Fortune," and "The Oprah Winfrey Show." Both HBO and King World purchased ten percent stakes in the interactive entertainment developer.

In other Crystal Dynamics' news, **Panasonic** is bundling *Crash 'N Burn* with its REAL 3DO Interactive Multiplayer system being introduced this fall. *Crash 'N Burn*, a 3D combat-racing sim set in the future, sports digital innovations like simultaneous scaling and rotation and 3D audio sound effects. Crystal Dynamics' second title, *Total Eclipse*, debuts in November. (Crystal Dynamics Inc., 2460 Embarcadero Way, Palo Alto, CA 94303. (415) 858-4990.)

Question: What do Milton Bradley, Tonka, and **Virgin Interactive** have in common? Answer: They're all owned, at least in part, by **Hasbro**. The world's largest manufacturer of toys recently bought 15% of Virgin Interactive Entertainment for approximately $25 million. Virgin has developed Hasbro properties before, like *Monopoly* and *Risk*, and will produce more titles for Hasbro through a joint venture between the two partners.



Panasonic's REAL 3DO

Sanctuary Woods is kicking off a new marketing program that divides its edutainment titles into three product lines: *I-tales* features interactive storybooks for ages 3 and up; *I-ventures* targets ages 8 and up with interactive adventures; and the *I-learn* series will promote material that's more strictly educational. Sanctuary Woods has recently released two *I-tales* titles: *Shelley Duvall's It's A Bird's Life* (3DO) and *Oscar Wilde's The Selfish Giant* for Mac/MPC. Sanctuary Woods also announced the hiring of former Apple executive Michael Grant to spearhead its forthcoming *I-television* division. *I-television* titles will debut on CD-ROM and then move to interactive cable once that infrastructure is established. (Sanctuary Woods, 1875 Grant St., San Mateo, CA 94402. (415) 5786340.)

You have to get money to spend money to make money: **Knowledge Adventure**, the educational software developer, has completed a second round of financing. The $6.6 million in venture capital was raised by a group of investors including Paramount Communications and AT&T Venture Company. Knowledge Adventure is earmarking the money for speeding up product development and beefing up promotional funding. (Knowledge Adventure, Inc., 4502 Dyer St., La Crescenta, CA 91214 (818) 542-4200.)



AND THE WINNER IS...

Flight-sim addicts who really want to earn their wings might want to check out a new contest sponsored by MicroWINGS, the International Association for Aerospace Simulations. The prize: a three-day trip for two to SimuFlite Training International in Dallas. The winner will receive ground-school training and instruction in a Learjet simulator. On the third day, the winner will actually fly a Learjet 35 (under supervision, of course). Entry cards for this drawing can be found inside the boxes of **Mallard Software**'s aviation software. For more information, contact Mallard Software at (214) 539-2575 or MicroWINGS at (214) 324-1406. The deadline for entries is February 28, 1994.

The winners have been announced in **Accolade**'s "Hole Design Contest," co-sponsored by Golf Illustrated magazine and Jack Nicklaus Productions. The contest asked participants to design three perfect golf holes (an ideal par 3, 4, and 5) using the architect feature in Accolade's *Jack Nicklaus Golf & Course Design: Signature Edition.* The three grand prize winners — Rev. Paul Crocket of Raleigh, NC; Mark Rogers of Grand Rapids, MI; and Marshall Gerometta of Griffith, — have won trips to play in a Pro-Am event at Colleton River Plantation in South Carolina, along with other prizes. *(Accolade, 5300 Stevens Creek Blvd., San Jose, CA 95129. (408) 985-1700.)*

Capstone is promoting its roster of movie and TV-based computer games with the "Reach for the Stars" Sweepstakes. The contest, running through December, features a grand prize trip to Hollywood. Entry forms can be found in specially marked Capstone packages, including *Terminator 2 Chess Wars, Wayne's World, Surf Ninjas, Homey D. Clown,* and *The Beverly Hillbillies.* Speaking of Capstone contests, the Miami-based publisher recently awarded the grand prize in its *An American Tail* Sweepstakes. Eight-year-old Michael Milroy and family, of ColoradoSprings, CO, were flown to Universal Studios Florida where they toured the park and lunched with *An American Tail*'s Fieval the Mouse. (Capstone Software, Airport Corporate Center, 7200 Corporate Center Dr., Suite. 500, Miami, FL 33126. (305) 591-5900.)



Fieval the Mouse uses a sleeper hold on sweepstakes winner Michael Milroy. Michael's dad, Dennis, waits for the tag.



THE ONLY THING IT DOESN'T SIMULATE IS EAR POPPING.



If it were any more real, your chair would be in a 30° bank. Our new Microsoft® Flight Simulator™ has four planes, each with its own instrument panel created digitally from actual photographs. There are storm clouds and sunsets to fly into. Crashes are scarily real. And you can fly to airports anywhere in the world. For even more detailed flights, there are New York and Paris scenery enhancements*. Everything is at your reseller. So, take off.

Microsoft Home

*New York and Paris scenery enhancements coming this fall © 1993 Microsoft Corp. All rights reserved. Microsoft is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corp. Flight Simulator is a trademark of Bruce A. Artwick

BRIX

Publisher: MicroLeague Interactive Software **Developer:** Epic MegaGames

Rating:

Traveling a road forged by *Tetris*, MicroLeague has teamed up with Epic MegaGames to release *Brix*, a fast-paced puzzle game with similarly addictive qualities.

Brix takes familiar elements from a variety of popular games in the genre and applies its own distinct spin. The goal is simple: Maneuver differently colored bricks so that like-colored bricks touch and disappear. When all the bricks are removed from a screen, the level is completed, and you move on to the next challenge.



Complicating the process is a host of obstacles, including laser cannons, acid pools, and boiling lava. Several transporting devices, such as teleporters and elevators, make it possible to move bricks from a confined space to where they belong.



The presence of these features means that players must have nimble fingers as well as quick minds. Many solutions call for several bricks to be maneuvered quickly around a hazard, and that gives the game a nice arcade feel.



Still, some of *Brix*'s early levels are effortless to complete, which takes away from the game's replay value. And while there are five difficulty settings, ranging from easiest to hardest, the only difference is the amount of time given to complete the level, not in the design of the puzzle.

These are minor gripes, however. With more than 200 levels from which to choose, *Brix* offers many hours of satisfying puzzle-solving for one or two players. In addition, *Brix 2 Deluxe* — a companion set of games — offers a "level editor," which allows players to modify or design their own game environments using the *Brix* elements. Another handy feature is the "level solver," which shows frustrated players how to solve troublesome levels in exchange for points.

Featuring smooth animation and vivid 256-color graphics, *Brix* is a well-designed game that's sure to appeal to puzzle fans.

— Gary James

MicroLeague Interactive Software, 2201 Drummond Plaza, Newark, DE 19711-5711

CRIME CITY

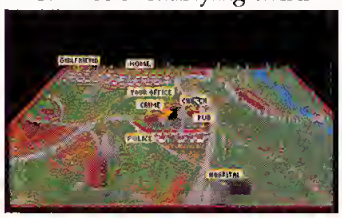
Publisher: Impressions **Developer:** I.F.

Rating:

People can't always afford to shell out $40 or more whenever they go shopping for a new game, nor can they always afford to spend hours at the computer mastering the game's mechanics once they get home. And with *Crime City*, from Impressions, they won't have to. This game marks the company's new line of Micro Mysteries products, a series of easy-to-play, inexpensive graphic adventures for the time- and cost-conscious consumer.



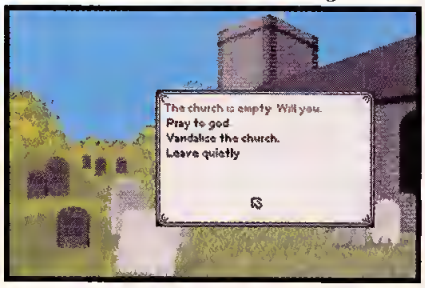
In *Crime City*, you play the part of a freelance writer who turns to sleuthing after his father is framed for murder. The game gives you 60 days to track down the real culprit and unravel the larger mystery that lies behind the killing. In classic crime-story fashion, the plot takes a lot of satisfying twists and turns. Nonetheless, all but the densest of detectives should have no trouble cracking the case in the allotted time. And if you do get stymied, the handy hint section in the manual should put you back on track.



Crime City retails for $19.99, a price that would seem to guarantee a no-frills gaming experience. And despite the attractive packaging and thorough manual, the cost-cutting becomes apparent as soon as the program is up and running. Sound is minimal, and the graphics tend to be crude and blocky. Fortunately, the absence of finely detailed artwork won't impede your investigation too much. Although you're required to search certain scenes for visual clues, key objects always stand out, even if it's not quite possible to discern what they are without clicking on them for a text description.

As far as solving the case is concerned, the game really calls for perseverance and patience more than any other combination of qualities. The latter trait is particularly important because a number of crucial revelations are keyed to the passage of time. The problem with this approach is that it often leaves you sitting around, waiting for the next bit of info to be revealed so that you can get back to the game.

At the very least, *Crime City* offers gamers on a budget an alternative to rummaging around the bargain bin at their local software outlet. And at a time when nearly every new game ups the hardware ante, *Crime City* runs quite well on a 286. In the end, though, *Crime City* delivers what you'd expect: modest entertainment at a moderate price.



— Jeff Seiken

Impressions Software, 222 Third Street, Suite 0234, Cambridge MA 02142

The One Magazine You Need for PC Gaming!

GAME PLAYERS PC Entertainment™

PC Entertainment leaves the competition behind with:

- TOTAL PC entertainment reporting in every issue!
- More screen-by-screen game analysis per issue than any other magazine!
- Insightful and absorbing feature articles!
- More PC industry and game news than ever before!

Order Today and SAVE 37%

GAME PLAYERS PC Entertainment

...meeting the needs of today's PC enthusiast!

Basic subscription price for 6 issues is $14.95. Annual newsstand price is $23.70. Single copy price is $3.95

YES! Rush me GAME PLAYERS PC ENTERTAINMENT for one full year (6 issues) for only **$14.95!**

GAME PLAYERS PC ENTERTAINMENT
P.O. BOX 54163
BOULDER, CO 80322-4163

☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ AmEx ☐ Payment Enclosed ☐ Bill Me

Credit Card # _____ Exp. ____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____ 5PPZ

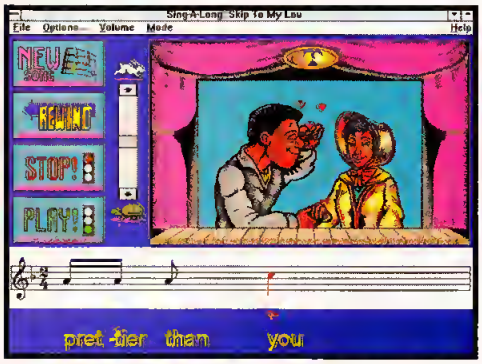
For faster service, CALL 201-703-9505.

SING-A-LONG

Publisher: Dr. T's Music Software **Developer:** Dr T's Music Software

Rating:

Kids love to sing, and they love repetition. With an endlessly patient accompanist who'll play songs that they already know, they can improve their musical abilities and reading skills while doing something they enjoy. That's the idea behind the new Windows title *Sing-A-Long* from Dr. T's Music Software, a kids' karaoke program that features well-known children's songs like "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep," "Pop Goes the Weasel" and "London Bridge."



To make each song more fun, *Sing-A-Long* includes an animated illustration based on the lyrics of the song. The program also displays the song's lyrics and the musical notation for the melody, with a bouncing object that helps kids to follow the lyrics as the song plays.

Like any children's program, *Sing-A-Long* wouldn't be worth much if it wasn't easy to use. Fortunately, the interface is a model of simplicity. Four large buttons handle the essential functions of playing, stopping, rewinding, and choosing another song, while a single slider controls the playback tempo. For even younger users, the program offers "Little Kids Mode." This option expands the program window to the full size of the screen, hiding the most obvious ways to get to the Windows desktop. Parents won't have any trouble switching back to normal operation, but this feature helps protect the rest of the system from curious pre-schoolers and their errant mouse clicks.

Sing-A-Long is pretty forgiving in the hardware department as well. Installing all the songs, animations, and sound effects only takes up 4.5 megs of disk space, and a standard VGA display is adequate for the program's 16 color, 640-by-480 window. *Sing-A-Long* takes advantage of standard Windows sound and MIDI device drivers to use any installed musical device. On systems equipped with a microphone, kids can also sing along through the computer's speakers, as *Sing-A-Long* mixes the mike with its own accompaniment and sound effects.



Sing-A-Long is a neat little program that doesn't try to do a lot, but what it sets out to do it does well. The songs are well-chosen for children of elementary-school age, and the animations that go with them are cute and engaging. Unexpected sound effects and animated characters who occasionally pop up on stage and deliver a line add to the fun, making this a very appealing program for kids.

— Tim Victor

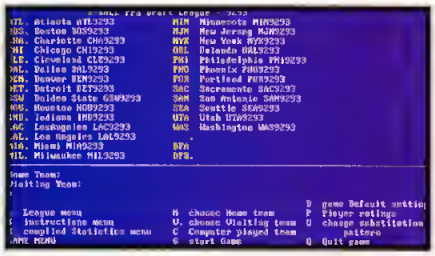
Dr. T's Music Software, 100 Crescent Road, Needham MA 02194

B-BALL

Publisher: Bob Chaikin **Developer:** Bobball

Rating:

Basketball has always been a difficult sport to simulate on the PC — too many figures moving too quickly in too confined an area. But *B-Ball* sidesteps the whole problem by substituting text for graphics, and statistical accuracy for arcade razzle-dazzle. Originally developed to help NBA teams analyze player performance (it's currently used by the Nets), *B-Ball* is aimed squarely at fans who want to experience the game from the vantage point of the coach at courtside rather than the players on the floor.



B-Ball comes in three distinct flavors: Full Season, Predict Games, and Single Game. The first two options allow you to rattle off a number of games in accelerated fashion, either between the same two teams (Predict Games) or according to a league schedule (Full Season). In both cases, your input is limited to setting the pattern of player substitution.

The Predict Games mode is primarily intended to forecast the outcome of upcoming games in the NBA using updated stats, which *B-Ball* designer Bob Chaikin hopes to make available on a regular basis throughout the 1993-94 season. The Full-Season option, on the other hand, has a variety of applications. You can use it to test the accuracy of the program's statistical model or to experiment with different substitution strategies for a team. You can also explore some intriguing what-if questions, such as how would the Bulls have fared last year without Michael Jordan. (Answer: not very well). At the end of the replay, *B-Ball* generates a mammoth statistical report covering just about every conceivable area of player and team performance.

The Single Game mode is by far the most involved of the three. It lets you play out an entire game, making substitutions for your team and setting its strategy on defense. You're also given limited control over the passing game, roughly analogous to calling set offensive plays. All of the actual action on the court is described in a running text narrative. For brevity's sake, the play-by-play does not mention every pass that's thrown, but the computer's commentary is detailed enough to convey the flavor of the back-and-forth flow of the game.



At present, *B-Ball* is only available direct from designer Chaikin, though he hopes his simulation will catch the attention of a major software company. Given its humble origins, it's not surprising that *B-Ball* could use some polishing — the keyboard interface is clumsy, and purists may take issue with the scant attention given to player stamina. Still, *B-Ball* has many of the ingredients serious basketball fans consider essential in a simulation — and that in itself is no small feat.

— Jeff Seiken

Bobball, 1523 Feltan Rd., S. Euclid OH 44121

HOLY CHEAT!

THE WORLD'S FIRST GAME UTILITY



Axis the Gamecheater gives you a few new tricks in your favorite games — special powers, enhanced weapons, and extra lives. So now you can get on with the adventure, past that nasty spiked pit, without burning your last life in a bad Super Dave imitation. Or you can loose your vengeance with that outlaw turbo laser cannon you've always wanted. With *Axis the Gamecheater,* you get the little boost you need to keep the game *fun!* Superpowers are yours on demand — with just the press of a key!

Axis the Gamecheater provides custom cheats for dozens of the most popular games, on PCs or Macs, and we're adding new games all the time. Ask for it at your favorite software source!

For more information, call
800-926-9677
or 901-682-9676, Fax: 901-682-9691

Baseline PUBLISHING

Product Information Number 138

Copyright © 1993, Baseline Publishing, Inc. All rights foreign and domestic reserved. Axis the Gamecheater and the Baseline logo are trademarks of Baseline Publishing, Inc. All other names are trademarks of their respective holders. Help! I'm being held captive in the fine-print disclaimer!

V FOR VICTORY: GOLD*JUNO*SWORD

Publisher: Three-Sixty Pacific **Developer:** Atomic Games

Rating:



Utah was bigger. Omaha was bloodier. But the three small beaches designated Gold, Juno, and Sword were the launching point for some of the most fierce battles for Normandy. The combined Allied Commonwealth force — made up of seasoned British and Canadian troops — faced the counterattack of the fanatical 12th "Hitler Youth" SS Panzer Division, the arrival of the 2nd Panzer Division, and the intense fighting for Caen, Villers-Bocage, and Le Hamel. Add to this the massive beach congestion that gave the Germans time to call up reinforcements, and you have some *very* intense combat. For the Germans, holding Caen and driving the Allies into the sea was imperative, and they fought harder here than they fought anywhere else on the Cotentin peninsula during the invasion.

Now, Three-Sixty Pacific and developers Atomic Games are putting us right in the thick of things with *Gold*Juno*Sword*, the latest installment in the unequalled *V for Victory* series. The *V for Victory* titles feature SVGA graphics that create the three-dimensional look and feel of classic board war-games, while utilizing a slick, intuitive interface and varying degrees of command control to make these the most user-friendly war-games ever made. Employing the same system as the others in the series, *Gold*Juno*Sword* uses a simple introductory manual and progressively more complex scenarios to ease players into the system.

The seven scenarios have varying lengths of game play, from an estimated one to sixty hours. A simple battle for the Orne Bridges gets things rolling, while in the second scenario the 12th SS Panzer and British 3rd Infantry square off against each other. One scenario involves the Commonwealth's drive from the beaches and attempt to link up with neighboring Omaha beach, while yet another poses a hypothetical isolating maneuver by the Germans to prevent that from happening. The advance across the Odon River, the siege of Villers-Bocage, and the entire campaign game round out this healthy mix of scenarios.



The *V for Victory* system is very nearly flawless. Strong AI routines, a graceful interface, and superior graphics make this the *ne plus ultra* of war-games. The one gripe I have with the series is that of the four games, two involve Normandy. Hey, Atomic — we'd love it if you gave us some battles in the North African and Pacific theatres!

— T. Liam McDonald

Three-Sixty Pacific, 2105 South Bascam Ave., Suite 380, Campbell CA 95008

CROSSWIRE

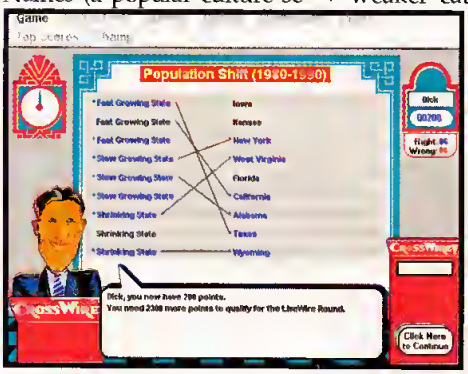
Publisher: Silver Sun **Developer:** Silver Sun

Rating:



There's been a real proliferation of Windows entertainment packages lately — but most are little more than collections of card games, or simple puzzle games. So I was a little skeptical when I first saw *Crosswire*; I was expecting just another Windows distraction. But developers Silver Sun proved me wrong with this addictive trivia title. *Crosswire* is surprisingly entertaining, and once its gotten its hooks into you there's a good chance you'll start spending less and less time with your more productive applications.

Crosswire is designed to resemble a television game show, complete with a toothy host and clever opponents. The game itself is relatively simple. In each round, you select from categories ranging from Real Names (a popular culture selection) to President's Wives (a history set). When the round begins, two columns appear on the screen. Each entry on the left matches an entry on the right: In Real Names, for example, the left column entry Sting would match the right column choice Gordon Sumner.



A clock ticks away as you race to match the two columns, and the round ends either when time runs out or you've made all of the matches. Incorrect answers cost you points, and disqualify you from receiving a time bonus for the round.

You play several solo rounds, and if you collect enough points you go on to challenge the Crosswire champion. The champ is a randomly chosen computer opponent, selected from a pool of artificial competitors, each with particular strengths and weaknesses. This gives you a real edge, because you can challenge the champ in one of his or her weaker categories. If you're skilled enough to beat the champion, you travel on to the Highwire round, where you must match all the entries correctly in the brief time allowed while trying to avoid cleverly disguised fake answers. If you win the Highwire round, you'll get to choose some fabulous imaginary prizes.

Crosswire has a lot going for it. The trivia is challenging but not impossible, and the categories are cleverly designed and interesting. An entire game takes only about five minutes, so it's perfect for quick work breaks. *Crosswire* is just plain fun — definitely a great choice for Windows fans looking for a fast-paced, pleasant diversion.

—Trent Ward

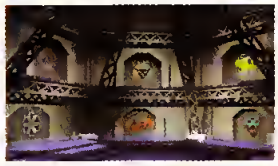
Silver Sun, 100 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

100 TONS OF OVERKILL





Introducing a new breed of software. A new extreme. A quantum leap in combat simulators. It doesn't push the envelope. It shreds it. ▲ Mechwarrior II: The Clans creates a new reality. A world of sights, sounds and action that can bring you to the brink of sensory overload. Feel what it's like to control 100 tons of pure hostility, with enough firepower to vaporize a squadron of F-15s. ▲ Atop a 31st-century BattleMech four stories high, you're thrust into the most eye-popping missions imaginable. Each mission a frenzied fight for victory, honor and the glory of The Clan. ▲ Mechwarrior II is a guaranteed adrenaline rush. Go one-on-one in real-time via modem. Pick from 16 phenomenal 'Mechs and 40 futuristic weapon systems. Use multiple POVs. Select from hundreds of missions in every conceivable environment. Choose instant action or a complete career. ▲ Mechwarrior II: The Clans, so heavy it crushes the competition.





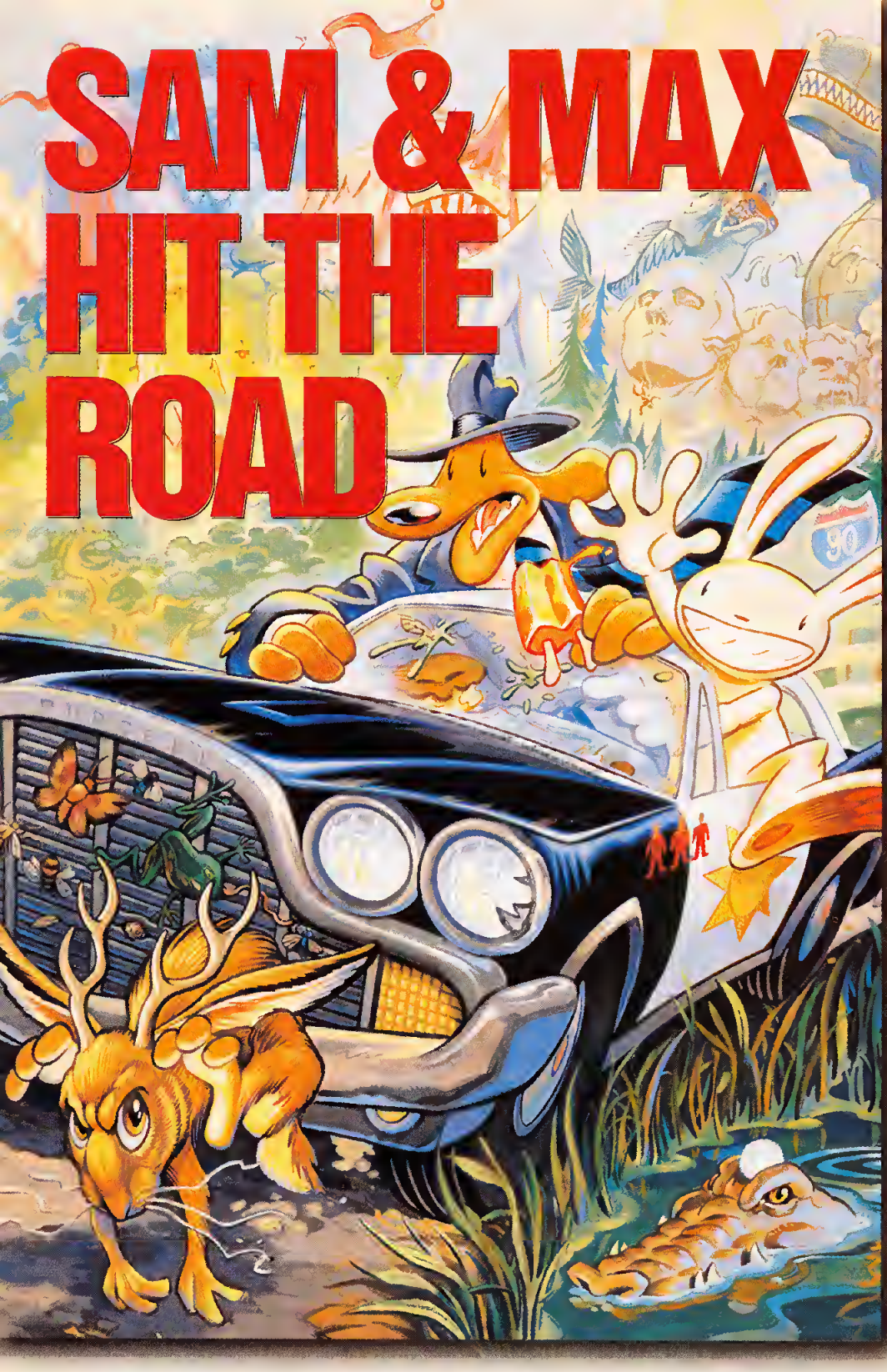
ACTIVISION®

Mechwarrior II: The Clans is available for IBM and compatible computers. SNES version also available. To order see your local retailer or call (800) 477-3650.

BattleTech, BattleMech, 'Mech and Mechwarrior are Registered Trademarks of Fasa Corporation

Product Information Number 106

SAM & MAX HIT THE ROAD





Prologue

Conjoined carnival proprietors Shep and Burl Kushman are confused. Their star attraction, Bruno the Frozenest Bigfoot, has somehow come unfrozen and fled the carnival, along with Trixie the Burmese Giraffe-Necked Girl. The two must be found!

Meanwhile, Conroy Bumpus, a diminutive and quite possibly insane Country & Western star, is also a bit vexed. He'd hoped to purchase the Bigfoot for his own. Now he and his assistant, Lee Harvey, are hot on the trail of the skeedaddled sasquatch — and their intentions can only be evil. They must be thwarted!

Somewhere out there are two very tall and very strange creatures, alone and hunted...

Oooh, it's so adventurey!

Chapter 1: The Freelance Police

What has 8 legs, 63 teeth, long fluffy ears, and a callous disregard for private property?

What has the fuzzy, hyperkinetic charm of Calvin & Hobbes, the sarcastic humor of David Letterman, and the cheerful malevolence of Penn & Teller?

BUCKLE UP — IT'S GOING TO BE A BUMPY RIDE

SCOTT WOLF





What do you call a dog in a rumpled blue suit and fedora and a rabbit in a grin and not much else, who fight crime and savagely protect the rights of innocents?

Time's up. You call 'em Sam and Max, Freelance Police.

Chapter 2: The Name of the Game...

...is *Sam & Max Hit The Road*. It's from LucasArts, one of the most dependable game publishers around. From flight sims to full-talking CD-ROM adventures, the designers at LucasArts have an uncanny understanding of what game players like and don't like in their games. *X-Wing* received very high marks from nearly everyone who played it (the debates over its 100 percent mission success requirement rage on) and, most recently, *Day of the Tentacle* knocked both children and adults for a loop with its astounding combination of classic cartoon-style animation and outrageous storyline.



But when Management requested that a new game be completed within a year, there was much consternation among even LucasArts' designers. Had the powers that be gone mad? Didn't they realize how much work was involved in crafting one of these gems out of the pure nothingness? Who could possibly pull off such a miracle?

Chapter 3: Who Indeed

Enter Sam & Max — a big canine gumshoe and a gaunt, razor-toothed rabbit. They are the creations of writer/artist Steve Purcell, who arrived at LucasArts in 1988. This unlikely pair of anthropomorphic animals have starred in four of their own comic books, and have a cult following in the comic underground.

"Sam & Max are actually based on comics drawn on typing paper by my younger brother, Dave," Purcell says. "He would get bored and leave the cartoons unfinished and then I would finish them, but I'd have the characters speaking in ways that kids his age wouldn't understand (Sam: "My mind is a swirling miasma of scintillating thoughts and turgid ideas." Max: "Me too."). You know, talking just to enjoy the sound of their own voices."

Steve got his brother's consent to make the characters his own (a well-known Older Brother ploy) and they were published for the first time in his art school's newspaper. By the time Steve came to work for LucasArts, one Sam & Max comic book was already in print (*Sam & Max Freelance Police, Special Edition*; *Fishwrap*) and another was on the way (*Sam & Max On The Road*; *Comico*).

Sam & Max were well known by many LucasArts staffers and have become almost cultural icons around the building, even appearing in the company's newsletter, *The Adventurer*. So when Management's new-game-in-one-year request was made, it was only natural that the Freelance Police were suggested as the stars.

"Sam & Max already existed," explains Steve. "They had personalities and a relationship, a history. In fact, I'd say that they have as much or more personality than any other LucasArts game characters."

But then, that's just the sort of thing you'd expect the game's creator to say. And in fact, he did.



Chapter 4: Road Trip!

"My family moved from Ohio to California in the summer of 1966, in a big black Chrysler," Steve recalls. "We were always trying to get Dad to stop at those cheesy roadside attractions. You know, the Reptile Farms and Jackalope Preserves, or anything claiming to be the World's Largest Something." And, of course, Steve wanted to stop at every Stuckey's — that Mecca to the souvenir-starved, heralded for miles by faded, sunbleached billboards featuring vaguely foodlike pecan rolls and 99-cent breakfasts.

It's his recollections of that magical journey across an America that reveled in the cheap, unhealthy, and perverse that form the backdrop for the *Sam & Max Hit The Road* adventure game.

Chapter 5: Assigning Blame

The Sam & Max design team boasts an impressive lineup. In addition to Purcell, who provides the creative and art direction, there are project leaders Michael Stemmle and Sean Clark, lead artist Peter Chan, and lead animator Collette Michaud.

Mike joined LucasArts in 1990 and spent a year-and-a-half as lead programmer for *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*. Sean led the conversions of *Indy*, *The Secret of Monkey Island*, and *Loom* to Macintosh, Amiga, and CD-ROM platforms. Peter was among the first designers to use scanned art in a computer game (*Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge*) and did all the background art for *Day of the Tentacle*. Collette was the lead animator for *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*.

This was very much a team effort," Steve says. "We all thought it would be fun to create a game with many different places to visit and with very strange characters. Everyone contributed ideas and we used the road trip because it's kind of modular by design and allows that."

It's been really interesting to see Sam & Max animated by other people," he adds, "and to see their movements broadened in ways I never thought of. The way Sam swings his arms when he walks, for instance. You don't have to consider that in comics."



Chapter 6: Showtime

Sam & Max Hit The Road is being billed as a Comedy Adventure. *Day of the Tentacle* is called a Cartoon Adventure. What's the difference? Well, while *DOTT* is groundbreaking in many respects, it retains a more traditional overall style — a safe, "something for everyone" approach. *Sam & Max Hit the Road* has more of an edge, treading that fine line between irreverence and bad taste, and crossing it when necessary. Like "The Simpsons" or "Rocky and Bullwinkle," *Sam & Max* combines a terrific, cartoony look with humor only an adult will fully appreciate.



One thing you'll notice right away is the lack of an Action Menu (or any menu, for that matter) at the bottom of the screen. It's been replaced by an interface of pop-up icons. Click on the right mouse button, and the cursor cycles through what can be called Walking Fingers, Looking Eye, Pick-Up Hand, Talking Mouth, and Using Hand. The cursor functions like a minesweeper, changing to alert you when you've moved over something you can manipulate or interact with; the Eye and Mouth both open, for example. The Pick-Up Hand clenches, and the Use Hand squeezes one of those rubbery Martian face-popping toys ("I think it's called an Obie," Steve says). If a selected tool can be used, a red outline appears around it.

Dialogue options also pop up as a row of icons. Click on the picture of Bruno to ask questions about Bruno the Bigfoot, click on the picture of Trixie to ask...well, you get the idea. There's also a "non-sequitur" icon, so that Sam & Max can "talk just to enjoy the sound of their own voices" (Sam: "I'm thinking of a number between one and ten and I don't know why." Max: "Me too."). Sam can even use Max as a tool in many situations — because, as Max is fond of saying, "Gratuitous acts of senseless violence are *my* forte!"



Their inventory, a flimsy cardboard box, is the only icon to appear on screen regularly, and when accessed shows all the items Sam & Max are carrying, as well as all of the command icons. All of this technical, menuless jiggery-pokery freed up 33 percent more of the screen for artwork, so Sam & Max have the use of the entire screen for their radical antics.

Sam & Max features a new version of LucasArt's iMUSE (Interactive Music & Sound Effects) engine, which now provides much higher sound quality on all sound boards, as well as a more seamless musical soundtrack. The *Sam & Max* score is a bluesy-jazzy kind of thing, with a walking bass and cool vibraphone you'd expect to hear Sam Spade or Nick Danger narrating over ("Suddenly it hit me, like the hot kiss of a right cross...").

Chapter 7: On the Road Again

As Sam & Max traverse the U.S. of A. in their black and white 1960 DeSoto, a colorful "Greetings from the USA" postcard serves as their map and guides them to Snuckey's (no relation) Restaurants across the country. As on any long car trip, you'll no doubt need to take an occasional rest stop — and Snuckey's shelves are loaded with fine Official Sam & Max brand diversions. If nothing else, the Freelance Police are ever-mindful of their own marketability. There are Sam & Max Paint-By-Number Books, Sam & Max Portable Car-Bomb Games, Sam & Max Paper Doll Dress-Up Books, and more, all of which are playable as mini-games within the game. There's also highway surfing and other wholesome family activities, like riding the Cone Of Tragedy and playing Wak-A-Rat back at the carnival.



In addition, *Sam & Max* has its own set of dedicated screen savers. After a few minutes of inactivity, your screen will start melting, folding over on itself, or displaying multiple Sams and Maxes parading around in different color palettes.



In all, *Sam & Max* has about 60 different screens and over a dozen locations throughout the USA — plenty of time and space to get Lost in America.

Epilogue

Although I can't reveal any details about *Sam & Max*'s spectacular finale, I can say that it was created on an SGI (Silicon Graphics) 3-D workstation, and involves lots of trees and the World's Largest Ball of Twine.

I asked Steve if he could describe *Sam & Max Hit the Road* in one word or less. He thought for a moment and then replied, "Nihilism, Violence, and Fun."

Look for *Sam & Max Hit the Road* in time for Christmas.

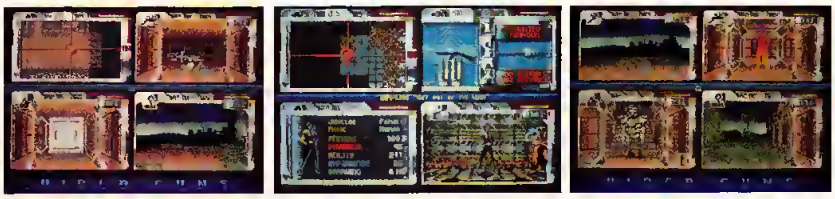
(Editors' Note: No cartoon animals were harmed during the making of this game or the writing of this article.)

TRAVEL TO EXOTIC LANDS, MEET STRANGE CREATURES AND BLOW THEM AWAY!



You've always considered yourself a soldier of fortune with a knack for survival and a thirst for green. Your mission? Anything for a price. But this time it's different. The stakes are a little bit greater and the danger is all too real. You and your team are on a desolate moon, surrounded by less than friendlies, with only one goal besides the mission itself; stay alive long enough to enjoy your newfound wealth.

Hired Guns is an adventure that can accommodate up to four players simultaneously. It features furious non-stop action, first person 3-D view and auto-mapping of the 1.7 million cubic meters of play area. Choose from 12 different richly developed characters to suit your needs for the mission at hand. Journey through this desolate land, all the while testing your survival skills. And remember, TAKE NO PRISONERS!



Hired Guns is available on IBM compatible and Amiga formats.

Psygnosis
675 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 497-7794

Product Information Number 103



THE RETURN OF AVALON HILL

The board-gaming giant tests the PC waters — again

JEFF SEIKEN

The first faint tremors occurred at the end of 1992, when The Avalon Hill Game Company hired a new director of operations, Jim Rose, to revive its moribund computer game division. Veteran observers of the war-gaming scene had heard such rumblings before from Avalon Hill, but this time the company seemed earnest.

Then last August came a blockbuster announcement that, at least for war-game fans, was a sure sign that Avalon Hill was serious this time: Rose had signed Atomic Games, developer of the acclaimed *V for Victory* series, to produce a computer version of Squad Leader, the marquee title in Avalon Hill's board-game line. And now, less than a year after the build-up began, Avalon Hill is ready to unleash a barrage of new software that could challenge Three-Sixty and SSI for the top position on the computer war-gaming heap.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Ask a random sample of war-gamers how they became interested in historical simulations, and most will probably point to an Avalon Hill product. Avalon Hill is the company that launched the whole war-gaming craze when it marketed a table-top game called Tactics back in the 1950s. It has produced hundreds of others since then, and today remains the premier publisher of strategy board games.

But when the company entered the PC game market back in the early '80s, the expert design work and unswerving commitment to quality that characterized its board games seemed strangely absent. True, Avalon Hill enjoyed a few successes, such as a computer version of its Diplomacy board game and Under Fire, an original design of tactical level combat during WWII. But there were also a lot of disappointments, and even some outright disasters like *Civil War*, which suffered from both crippling bugs and dreadful CGA graphics at a time when EGA was the norm. By the end of last year, Avalon Hill's once active



Third Reich



Third Reich

Microcomputer Games Division had lapsed into almost total dormancy.

Enter Jim Rose. Rose joined



Third Reich

Avalon Hill after a five-year stint in corporate computing at Zenith Data Systems, bringing with him an impressive resume that included more than 20 years of experience as a war-gamer and an extensive background in computers. Rose had one clear precondition for accepting the post at Avalon Hill: "[They] had to give me full reign and total control," he says. "And they have."

For many of us, news of the agreement with Atomic may have been the first inkling that big things were brewing at Avalon Hill. But to Rose the Atomic deal actually represents the finishing touch on his ambitious plans to rev up the company's production schedule and restore its credibility among computer gamers. "My first goal was to fill the pipeline with a year's- worth of quality releases," he explains. "Optimally, I was hoping for five a year, which works out to roughly one a quarter." By the summer, the docket of upcoming games numbered four: *Third Reich PC*, *Civilization*, *Blackbeard*, and *Fifth Fleet*. *Squad Leader*, which is scheduled for release in September of 1994, gave Rose his sought-after fifth.

As of this writing, *Third Reich PC* is due out by the beginning of November, with a Macintosh version to follow in the spring. (In general, Rose expects to repeat this pattern of releasing the game on the PC platform first, followed by Macintosh conversions some months later). As the first release from Avalon Hill's revamped software development offices, there's a lot riding on *Third Reich*. The release date has already been pushed back once, further heightening the speculation and expectation surrounding the game. But Rose views the delay as a reflection of his resolution not to repeat the mistakes that doomed some of Avalon Hill's previous efforts. "It was postponed mainly because we aren't going to let it go until it is complete," he states.

Avalon Hill has already released *Third Reich* for the Amiga and Atari ST platforms, but the PC version of the classic board game of WWII grand strategy will bear little resemblance to either. One of Rose's first acts after coming on board was to scrap the work that was already underway in porting the Amiga version to the PC, bring in a new in-house design team, and start afresh on the project. The results, he says, have been gratifying.

Unlike the bowdlerized Amiga design, *Third Reich PC* is a completely faithful translation of the board game. The interface is entirely point-and-click, and the map and unit counters are rendered in crisp, high-res VGA graphics. The game actually offers a choice of maps: one is an artfully drawn relief map intended for general use, while the other is an exact reproduction (right down to the garish color scheme) of the map found in the table-top version, for the traditionalist who wouldn't dream of playing with anything else. Of course, users can switch between the two at will.

In addition to providing players with a friendly and aesthetically pleasing game environment, *Third Reich* also seeks to redress what has been a perennial problem in practically every computer war game ever designed: the quality of the AI. Rose has assigned one programmer to work exclusively on this part of the game. In tackling this task, the programmer has enjoyed something of a big headstart — few war games have ever been more thoroughly picked over, analyzed, and dissected in print than Third Reich.

But that's only the half of it. For *Third Reich*, Avalon Hill is employing neural net technology to create what Rose calls "a dynamic AI." "The biggest failure in computer war games is that the AI is linear," Rose says. "In linear AIs, all conditions are pre-set, which makes for a predictable environment after a while. But with neural net technology, the AI can learn from its mistakes. It also has the ability to statistically calculate all possible moves to its best possible advantage at all times." Exactly how tough is the computer? According to Rose, the programmer doing the AI has been playing Third Reich since it was first published in 1974, and the computer beats him on a regular basis.

BUT WAIT...THERE'S MORE!

Following *Third Reich* is *Civilization*, slated to hit store shelves early in the first quarter of 1994. Not to be confused with *Sid Meier's Civilization*, this *Civilization* is based on the popular Avalon Hill board game of the same name, which predates the MicroProse product. As with *Third Reich PC*, *Civilization* will duplicate all of the features of the tabletop title — but Rose is quick to point out that Avalon Hill will not fall into a rut of producing computerized clones of existing board games.

"Doing direct ports of board games is not essential," he asserts. In fact, it can often be counterproductive because it fails to take full advantage of everything that the technology has to offer. When adapting a board game to the computer, Rose says, the design team needs to consider carefully how the game can profit from the environment change.

Fifth Fleet and *Blackbeard* will be the first two products that really put these ideas into practice. *Blackbeard*, for instance, will feature a much larger playing area than the tabletop edition, whose map size was basically dictated by the size of the box. A rich soundtrack and colorful graphics will evoke the romance and high adventure of the Golden Age of Piracy in a way that mere paper and cardboard never could.



Civilization

And even greater changes are in store for *Fifth Fleet*, the modern naval simulation being readied for a spring release. Rose has lined up some top-flight talent to do the design chores, starting with four members of the Department of Defense programming company that developed the logistics software the Marine Corps used for the Somalia operation. He's also called in Joe Balkoski, who designed the Fifth Fleet board game and its sequels, to assist with the project. The finished product should serve as a dramatic illustration of just what Rose has in mind when he talks

about doing computer conversions that transcend the limits of the board-game medium.

"At the first development meeting with Joe, I told him to tell us where you cut corners in Fifth Fleet [the board game] for playability, tell us where you needed to make compromises, tell us all of the things you wanted to do but couldn't because they weren't feasible," Rose recalls. "And we will be implementing everything he wanted to put in."

Adapting the Squad Leader/Advanced Squad Leader game system to the computer wasn't quite so simple. Rose realized that he was dealing with something of a sacred cow; Advanced Squad Leader is revered by legions of fans who play it to the exclusion of all else and who would like nothing better than to see a computer version that's an exact carbon of the board game. But in Rose's mind, the very complexity and sophistication of the system precluded attempting a straight conversion. "Of all of the games on the entire earth, Advanced Squad Leader has got to be the hardest to put on the computer simply because it has developed such an extensive rules base to regulate the board environment," he says.



Blackbeard

A FRIEND IN NEED

The alliance with Atomic Games actually arose out a very fortunate set of circumstances. In his first six months at Avalon Hill, Rose had already fielded around 20 different proposals to do a computer version of Squad Leader — but none had panned out. On his own initiative, Rose then sounded out Atomic Games, whose *V for Victory* series he so ardently admires. By coincidence, Atomic was already far along in developing a game that dealt with the very same subject: squad-level combat in WWII. A deal was struck, and Atomic was told to forge ahead with its design.

Both Rose and Atomic president Keith Zabalaoui are careful to emphasize that the game will not be a direct translation of Squad Leader. "It's taking everything that's good about the Squad Leader game system and adding to that," Rose says. For exactly this reason (and until a better title comes along), Rose and Zabalaoui have even taken to calling the game *Beyond Squad Leader*. "If you're looking for an implementation of the Squad Leader rules manual, then you won't be happy," Zabalaoui warns. "But if you want something that portrays the same underlying tactical warfare system, then this one will knock your socks off."

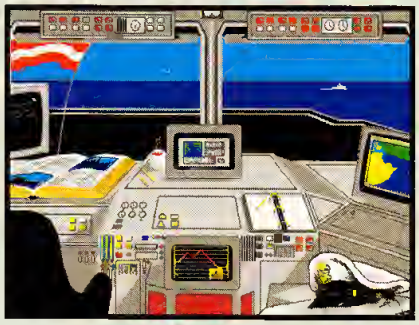
While the board game has been hailed for its breathtaking detail, the computer game takes the pursuit of realism to new and even more rarified heights. During combat, for example, the computer calculates how much lead each weapon is putting into the air, based on such factors as rate-of-fire, magazine capacity, and bullet weight. And instead of relying on a single morale factor to express a squad's elan, the program maintains a psychological profile of each soldier and tracks how he's being affected by the stresses of combat. The model for this aspect of the game was developed by a combat psychiatrist.

The SVGA graphics also promise to be different from anything that's been seen before in a computer war-game. The 3-D perspective will incorporate light-rendered, digitized models of tanks and vehicles. Individual actions will be choreographed, so you'll actually get to see a soldier fire a flame thrower or hurl a demolition charge. The program will also include an option for real-time game play, for those who want a more realistic taste of what it's like to make decisions under pressure and under fire.



Beyond Squad Leader

With five games in various stages of development, Avalon Hill is giving gamers a lot to look forward to — but there are even more surprises waiting in the wings. As soon as his in-house staff gets *Third Reich PC* out the door, Rose plans to turn them loose on a new design that has no board-game antecedents. Rose declines to give any specifics about the project, other than to say that it's a "hybrid," combining elements of war-gaming, role-playing, and strategy. He's also currently negotiating with an unnamed third party for the rights to publish another original product. Again he's tight-lipped on the details, acknowledging only that it's a war game and will feature SVGA graphics. If the deal goes through, the game should be ready in January.



Fifth Fleet

As all of these projects go forward, however, Rose also foresees some exciting developments for fans of Avalon Hill's board game line. The last two years have seen a surge of interest in playing board games against distant opponents by trading information or files through electronic mail. An enterprising war-gamer named Scott Hamilton has already marketed a software utility called *Aide De Camp* to facilitate this kind of gaming, commonly referred to as play-by-electronic-mail or PBEM. At the moment, Rose is discussing with Hamilton the possibility of producing customized versions of *Aide De Camp* for use with specific Avalon Hill titles. Avalon Hill is also considering developing its own set of software for PBEM purposes. Either way, Rose expects to have something on the market before the end of the year. "Our ultimate goal is to make it possible for every available Avalon Hill board game to be played by e-mail," he says.

Of course, such pronouncements as this have a certain pie-in-the-sky quality to them. Given Avalon Hill's checkered history in the software arena, it's understandable that longtime computer war-gamers might view Rose's far-reaching plans with some degree of skepticism. A year from now, we'll be in a much better position to judge whether all the current signs of activity at Avalon Hill presaged a genuine eruption or merely amounted to so much noise. But if Rose accomplishes everything he envisions, it seems fairly certain that after slumbering through the first dozen years or so of the computer war-gaming boom, Avalon Hill will be alive and smoking through the next.

Avalon Hill, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214-3192

Pirates Has Gone Gold!

The best adventure game ever just got better!



Critics are raving about Pirates!® Gold

"Pirates! Gold is seductively beautiful, easy to learn, and sure to provide months of great gaming. Brovo, MicroProse!"

PC Entertainment

"The feel of the original game is still in the new version, with the addition of great graphics and sound support, allowing both newcomers and the ones who missed the original to experience a truly great game."

Strategy Plus

"The graphics are gorgeous and the sound is some of the best I have ever heard."

Computer Game Review

Now Pirates! Gold Takes The Excitement Even Further!

- Bombard more enemy ships!
- Feel the ring of crossing swords!
- Experience more action-packed combat on ships and land!
- Plunder treasure in all-new harbor towns!
- Gain power, prestige, or even the hand of the Governor's daughter!

Stunning new VGA/Super VGA art and graphics that bring to life the untamed era of piracy in the 17th century Caribbean!

Pirates!

MICROPROSE® ENTERTAINMENT • SOFTWARE

SERIOUSLY FUN SOFTWARE

©1993 MicroProse Software, Inc ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Product Information Number 221

To get our free catalog call 1 800 879-PLAY (Mon - Fri 8 30 am - 5 00 pm EST) or fill out the coupon and mail it to MicroProse Software, Inc • 180 Lakefront Drive • Dept D10 • Hunt Valley MD 21030-2245

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

BAV

Tim Victor

Not too long ago, personal computers were the province of fanatical hackers and pioneering hobbyists. Hard to use and not very capable, those primitive computers were nonetheless a means of expression for early enthusiasts. They offered a way to test newly developed skills, and a medium though which creative work could be appreciated by the rest of the computing community.

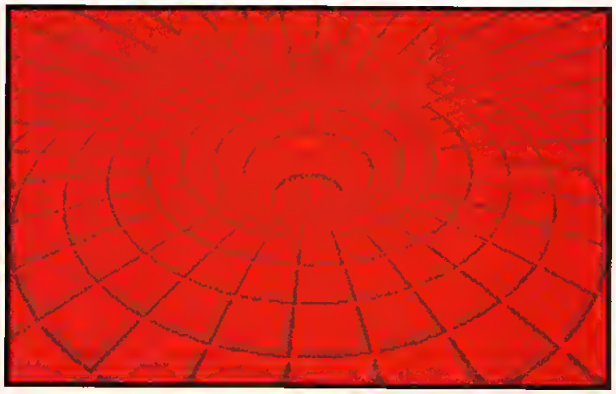
Thanks in part to the ingenuity and hard work of those pioneers, using a computer today doesn't require as such dedication as it once did. But for a group of programmers and artists around the world, programming a PC is solely a medium for personal expression.

Their creative statements are *Demo programs* — mini-movies of animation, graphics, and music that demonstrate the potential of the PC. Everything moves in a Demo. Three-dimensional objects twist and turn, becoming reflective, then translucent, then mutating into other shapes. A simple grid of dots becomes a waving flag, a spinning cube, even a 3-D landscape. Text twists and spirals before exploding like a skyrocket. A soundtrack underlies these visuals, with throbbing rhythms and soaring melodies all made from sampled sounds.

Unlike the promotional versions of commercial computer programs, which are also called "demos," these Demos exist purely for their own sake. They're released to the world as free software, and exist solely to promote the skills of their creators.

Without a doubt, the best-known PC Demo is "Unreal," released in the summer of 1992 by Finland's Future Crew. (All the screens in this story are taken from "Unreal.") Thanks to the brilliant sights and sounds of this Demo and its follow-up, "Panic," the nine young men who make up Future Crew have become nearly synonymous with the term Demos.

PC Demos are also influencing the world of commercial software. Mark Rein, vice-president of marketing for Epic Megagames, describes the Demo scene as "our secret weapon." Epic has worked with Demo authors to create several programs, collaborating with Future Crew on *Ken's Labyrinth*, and with Thomas Pytel (A.K.A. "Tran" of Renaissance, a U.S. demo group) on the new title *Zone 66*. Other upcoming Epic releases include *Jazz Jackrabbit*, whose developers include one of the founders of Dutch Demo group Ultraforce; and *Epic Pinball*, a shareware game based on a "Proof of Concept" Demo by Future Crew. Microleague will also offer a retail version of *Epic Pinball* under the name *Silverball* (covered in detail in our feature story on PC pinball games elsewhere in this issue).



It's a Social Thing

The PC Demo scene was born about four years ago, when Future Crew and Dutch Demo groups Ultraforce and Witan started working with PCs. Groups were already making Demos for the Commodore 64 and the Amiga, but PCs were considered too expensive, with limited music and graphics capabilities. PC prices were dropping, though, and new 386 CPUs, inexpensive VGA cards, and Sound Blaster sound systems started to shift the balance in favor of the PC. Without an Amiga's special graphics and animation circuitry, some effects are trickier to code on a PC, but that's the kind of challenge that drives Demo writers — the chance to do something that seems impossible.



This year, several top Amiga groups have released their first PC demos: "Optic Nerve" from Silents, "Delusion" from Sonic, and Majic 12's "Wish."

Like the military test pilots in the book *The Right Stuff*, Demo makers are constantly trying to push the envelope. But instead of flying planes, they live to take a PC to the limits of its performance. For the most part these Demo jocks are young and talented, primarily high school and college students. Most live in northern Europe, with Scandinavian countries well-represented. Asked about the predominance of European groups, Dan Wright (AKA "Pallbearer," of international demo group Toxic Zombies) explains in economic terms. "Good American programmers get hired. But in some parts of Europe, you don't have the same opportunities. Anyway, it seems like most Americans don't like the idea of working for free."

Epic's Mark Rein has another theory. "It's because European television is so bad," he says, half-jokingly. "There isn't much to watch, so kids turn to other means of entertaining themselves. Their educational system is very good, so a lot of them know how to program."

When asked why they do it, Demo makers sometimes cite technical challenges, the opportunity to hone their skills, or the possibility that it could lead to a computer-related career. But inevitably, they measure their accomplishments by the recognition they've earned from other Demo makers. Says Dan Wright, "When you code these Demos, you gain a lot of respect from the other people."

In Scandinavia, Demo parties and competitions add a social dimension to the hobby. The past year has seen several large Demo competitions, drawing hundreds or even thousands of fans. Among the more important shows were The Computer Crossroads, held last May in

TOMORROW'S GAMES TODAY:



THE UNDERGROUND DEMO SCENE

Goteburg, Sweden; and Assembly '93 in Kerava, Finland, last July. At Assembly '93, Future Crew unveiled "Second Reality", while Amiga supergroup Silents showed "Optic Nerve," their first PC Demo. German Demo groups Xography and Dust also drew attention with the premieres of "Elements" and "Dust," respectively. Groups are currently preparing for The Party '93, a competition to be held in Denmark this December.

To Find Out More...

As a showplace for the talents of some of the world's brightest young programmers, Demos offer an early look at the sights and sounds



of tomorrow's PC games. There are several ways to find out more about the PC Demo scene and to get copies of some demos. Entire Demo programs can be downloaded from bulletin board systems, and most Demos will include a list of additional bulletin boards to check. If you have Internet access, you can reach Demo archive sites at **ftp.uwp.edu**, **wasp.eng.ufl.edu**, or **ftp.sun.ac.za**, logging in via **ftp** as "anonymous." Demos



are currently available in the directory **/pub/msdos/demos/demos**, though the archive was being reorganized at press time. On Usenet, discussions about Demos take place in **comp.sys.ibm.pc.demos** — one of the best places to find out about new Demo releases, and to exchange messages with Demo makers around the world.

An Interview With Future Crew

The nine talented young men who make up Future Crew, all between the ages of 18 and 21 and all from Finland, are recognized as the premiere PC Demo group. They are: Samuli Syvahuoko ("GORE": PR), Sami Tammilehto ("Psi": coding), Mika Tuomi ("Trug": coding), Arto Vuori ("Wildfire": coding), Jonne Valtonen ("Purple Motion": music), Peter Hajba ("Skaven": music, graphics), Mikko Iho ("Pixel": graphics), Aki Maatta ("Marvel": graphics), and Jussi Laakkonen ("Abyss": BBS).

We were able to arrange an interview with GORE via electronic mail, and to get some of his thoughts about the PC Demo scene and Future Crew's role in it.

Special thanks go to Jarkko Heinonenk, for providing the e-mail connection.

Who started the group, and how long has it existed? How much longer do you expect to be doing this?

Psi started the group in 1988, so our group has existed for about 5 years now. At that time FC was working on the Commodore 64. The next year, we moved to the PC.

How much longer will we be around? Well, as long as we find this thing to be fun enough. So far we can't see the end! As the oldest PC Demo group, we think of our roles in the Demo scene as our lives. This is not just a hobby. This is *much* more.

Which of your Demos are you most proud of?

Of course, the latest Demo is always the best! But since "Unreal" was the one that made us famous, I'd have to say that we were particularly pleased with it at the time of it's release. We can't really say we're so proud of it anymore since we have "Panic" and now "Second Reality." By the time this magazine comes out, our latest Demo should be out, too. But "Unreal" is still the most precious. From a technical point of view, though, "Second Reality" would be the thing we're most proud of.

Who comes up with the ideas for your projects?

Everything comes from our own creativity. The new Demo effects are usually invented by our coders, since they know what is possible with the hardware. Sometimes the other members also come up with new ideas, but these ideas usually end up being impossible to convert into reality. The graphics and music are also usually invented by their makers. But when we design a Demo script, we do it together at Future Crew meetings. Then we can all have a chance to know about everyone's ideas, and we try to vote for the best ideas in order to create a good script.

Do you get to see many Amiga or C-64 Demos?

We like to watch Amiga and C-64 Demos very much and usually get a chance to do so at our meetings. Since one of our goals is to make PC Demos as good as the Amiga Demos, we have to check the status of that scene from time to time. When we see a very nice effect, one we haven't seen on the PC yet, we try to convert it to the PC hardware. Not only convert, but also to enhance and improve it. And when we come up with totally new ideas, we check to see if anyone has done them on the Amiga yet. If someone has, we have to start thinking about another Demo effect until we find a unique one. A very good example was Trug's landscape routine in "Unreal," and most of the routines in "Second Reality."

What's the biggest challenge facing PC demo writers?

You always have to find new ways of doing things faster — inventing new Demo effects, and so on. That can be very challenging for the coders. And of course, there's always an artistic challenge involved. The musicians and graphic artists have to make even better stuff than what they did last time, so they are constantly developing. You always have to improve upon your last Demo somehow, and that's beginning to grow out of hand (just see "Second Reality"). I don't know how long we can keep up this speed of releasing Demos and still constantly improve their quality, but you can be sure we'll do our best!

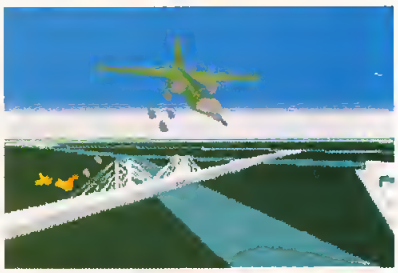
LASER-GUIDED MISSILES THAT CAN PINPOINT A WINDOW. A 10-TON BOMB LOAD THAT CAN LEVEL A TOWN. MAYBE THE BRITISH AREN'T SO CIVILIZED AFTER ALL.



©1993 Spectrum HoloByte, Inc All trademarks are the property of their respective owners

Tornado. Now in the States.

The Tornado. The plane that shredded runways and totaled buildings during the Gulf War. The plane that can scan the terrain ahead and automatically hug every hill and valley at just 200 feet. And the plane with wings that sweep forward to maneuver through tight bombing runs and sweep back to outrace even the fastest fighters.



Come in low and fast, and you can actually see the cables in the bridge you're about to raze.

Now you can climb into Britain's hottest plane without joining the RAF. With Tornado, the flight sim from Digital Integration and Spectrum HoloByte, you'll sit in a cockpit where the analog dials actually work. You'll operate the Thermal Imaging And Laser Designation (TIALD) system which zooms in on targets as small as the turret of a tank from as high as 20,000 feet. And you'll even control a squadron with a mission planner so accurate it's used to train real Tornado pilots in the RAF.



Fly this devastating aircraft once, and you'll be glad the British are on our side.

Digital Integration

Published by
Spectrum HoloByte

For Visa/MasterCard orders call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: (800) 695-GAME. For technical questions call (510) 522-1164 (M-F: 9PM-5PM Pacific Time).

Product Information Number 112

HIT the ROAD with SAM & MAX™





- Edgy animation!
- Twisted humor!
- Gratuitous antisocial behavior!
- Mini-games to play when you're at work!
- Full-screen graphics!
- Easy, pop-up verb and dialog icons!
- Roadside attractions your parents refused to stop at!











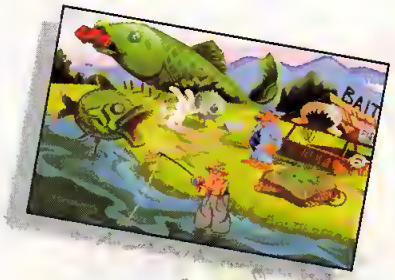
Join Freelonce Police, Som (dan't coll him o cortoon dag) and Max (a hyperkinetic, rabbity thing) os they pursue a runowoy cornivol Bigfoot ocross Americo's quirky underbelly.

Based an Steve Purcell's unconventionol cult comic books, Sam & Max will take yau on on irreverent raod trip adventure thot will put hair an yaur bock. Collide with tocky tourist trops ond intimidote their bizorre denizens.





Tune up the car, water the cat and make a half-crazed beeline to your nearest retailer for *Sam & Max Hit the Road*™. Don't forget to bring clean underwear!

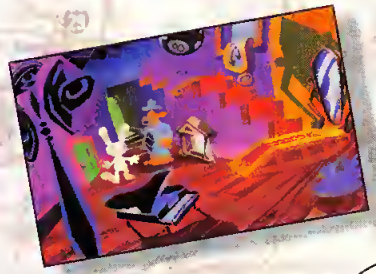














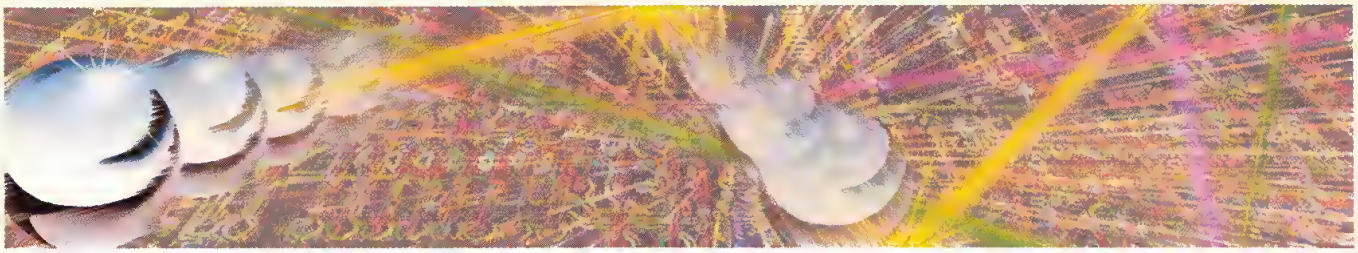


AVAILABLE FOR THE IBM PC. COMING SOON FOR THE IBM CD ROM.

Sam & Max Hit the Road™ and ©1993 LucasArts Entertainment Company. All Rights Reserved. Used under Authorization. Sam & Max is a trademark of Steve Purcell. LucasArts is a trademark of LucasArts Entertainment Company. The LucasArts logo is a registered service mark of LucasArts Entertainment Company. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines.

AVAILABLE FOR THE IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES. VISIT YOUR RETAILER OR CALL 1-800-STARWARS.

Product Information Number 136



EVER SINCE I WAS A YOUNG BOY, I'VE PLAYED THE SILVER BALL

Four New Pinball Simulations Put A High-Tech Spin On An Old-Fashioned Classic

Stephen Poole

For a kid like me growing up in High Point, NC — the "Furniture Capital of the World," home to the World's Largest Bureau — there wasn't a lot to do when the weekend rolled around. After all, these were the mid-Seventies, before the existence of that great teen gathering spot known as the video-game arcade, and most of the local pastimes ran toward petty crime or dull conformity.

But there was one escape: pinball. Every Friday and Saturday night you could find me at the bowling alley, slamming quarters into big, glaring, noisy machines with names like "Queen of Spades," "Bow 'N' Arrow," or "Mata Hari." Each one had its own nuances, almost a personality, that could only be revealed through hours of play — preferably consecutive, since there was usually another pinball addict standing behind you, just waiting to take over your favorite machine the moment your final ball drained home.

I still love pinball, but my lifestyle's changed since then, and I rarely get a chance to hit the pool halls and juke joints that are home to the really cool machines. I guess I could pop down to the arcade at the local mall and try out the latest tables, but I'd only have time for a few games at the most, and that's not the way pinball was meant to be played. Besides, I spend what little free time I have playing PC games...hey, wouldn't it be great if I could enjoy a little pinball on my computer?

1 PLAY 50¢ — NOT!

Either someone up there likes me, or several software publishers simultaneously realized that there are probably a lot of PC owners out there who grew up with pinball, and who would be excited at the chance to play an old favorite in a new setting. How else do you explain the appearance of no less than *four* pinball games for PCs in less than three months? Yep, I said four — that's more PC pinball action hitting store shelves in 90 days than we've seen in the last 9 years!

Time's a wastin', so let's play pinball!

Eight Ball Deluxe

Rating:

Canadian publisher **Amtex** is no stranger to the PC pinball scene. In 1992, it released *Tristan* for both the Macintosh and the PC; the Mac version won several awards, and the PC version won a *PC Entertainment* 1992 Excellence Award.

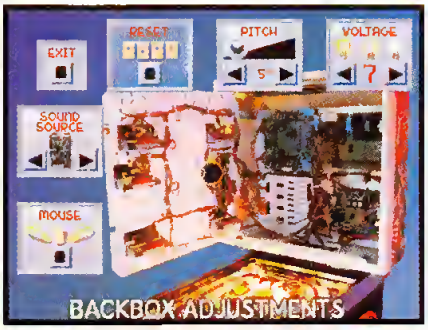
For its second game, however, Amtex wanted to create the most realistic pinball simulation possible. For starters, they chose to duplicate a real-life table rather than building one from scratch, and they picked a winner: Bally's "Eight Ball Deluxe." With its pool-table motif, numerous multipliers and drop targets, and digitized speech, "Eight Ball Deluxe" is the paradigm of intelligent pinball-table design — enough bells and whistles to keep things interesting, but not so many that you have trouble focusing on the different objectives.

Another change from *Tristan* is the table display. Cram an entire pinball table onto a PC monitor, and things like bumpers, rollover lanes, and the ball become pretty tiny. So



Eight Ball Deluxe

Amtex opted for a scrolling screen that displays only part of the table at a time. While this makes it more difficult to aim with precision at upper targets, it does allow for bigger, more



Eight Ball Deluxe

lifelike table graphics. Couple that enhanced visual presentation with realistic ball physics, and you've got the potential for one hot pinball simulation.

And *Eight Ball Deluxe* lives up to that potential. About the only way you can play a more realistic game of pinball at home is to buy a table and plop it in your game room.

Eight Ball Deluxe has setup options you won't find in any other PC pinball game. You can adjust table slant from 2° to 10°, as well as the power of the flippers, thumpers (the round bumpers at the top of the table), and slingshot bumpers; each setting noticeably affects game play. For players unfamiliar with the table, there's a Magnet option that lets you use a mouse to drag the ball around and learn all the different scoring features and bonus options.

Game play is uniformly excellent. The bumper action is the most realistic of any of the current crop of pinball sims, and the ball looks and moves great. Flippers can be controlled with mouse or keyboard, but with keyboard control it's easier to use *three* types of table nudges — left, right, and up — that are realistically animated. Those left and right nudges are crucial; when the ball's about to drain down the left side, for example, a right nudge is much more likely to save it than a generic upward nudge. No other pinball sim offers this degree of control at this level of playability.

And the digitized sound effects make *Eight Ball Deluxe* even more authentic. Bumper noises, the hum of the machine, the sound of the steel ball rolling down the table, even the familiar "Quit talking and start chalking!" — it's all here, and gives the game an atmosphere so vivid that you almost expect to see a half-empty Budweiser parked at the bottom of the table glass.

As good as *Eight Ball Deluxe* is, however, I do have a couple of suggestions for the folks at Amtex. An option to scroll the table view when cradling the ball with a flipper would make lining up precise upper-table shots both easier and more realistic. And since up to four players can compete, it would be nice if all four scores could be displayed simultaneously, at least at the end of the game.

But these little gripes pale in comparison to the technical achievements of *Eight Ball Deluxe*. Best of all, Amtex is planning PC versions of two more classics, "Royal Flush" and "Funhouse." If they're given the same kind of loving attention Amtex lavished on *Eight Ball Deluxe*, pinball fans will be in seventh heaven.

Pinball Dreams

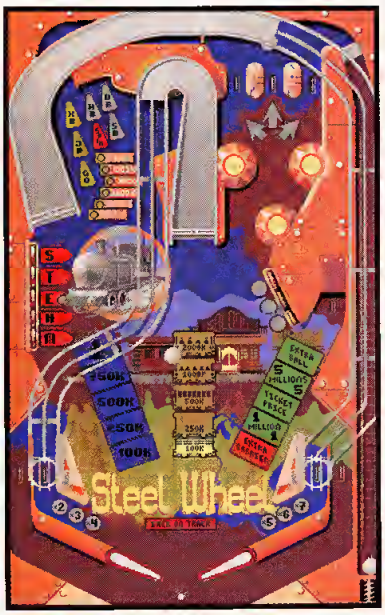
Rating:

21st Century Entertainment may not be a familiar name to PC gamers now, but that should change once word gets out about *Pinball Dreams*. Though it has the fewest setup options of any of the pinball sims on the market — you have no say-so over table angle or the number of balls (3) per game — *Pinball Dreams* still delivers a ton of fast and furious pinball excitement.



Ignition

One thing that makes *Pinball Dreams* especially fun is that you get not one, not two, but *four* tables, each designed from scratch for the PC. "Ignition" is a galactic affair sporting rockets, moons, and asteroids; "Steel Wheel" has a railroading theme, with a map of the U.S. in the center of the table; the bonuses in "Beat Box" let you make your way up the pop-music charts, from pressing a 12-inch single to starring in your own movie; and the "Graveyard" is filled with ghosts, haunted houses, and graves (of course).



Steel Wheel

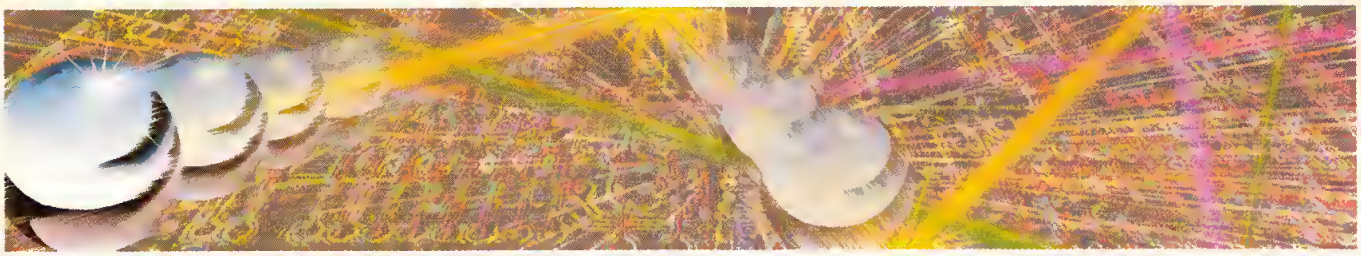
All the tables are excellently designed, with lots of ramps, bonus multipliers, and flipper-selectable rollover lanes — there are plenty of targets to aim for as the ball flies around the table. And does it ever fly! *Pinball Dreams* employs the same type of scrolling technique as *Eight Ball Deluxe*, and the designers at 21st Century Entertainment obviously put a lot of effort into ensuring fast — and smooth — game play. The movement of the ball off the

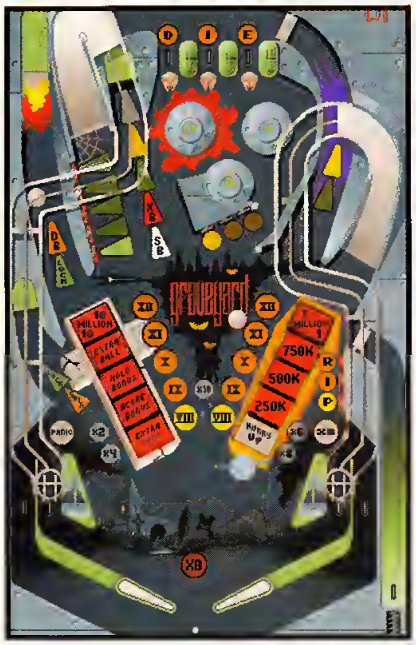


Beat Box

bumpers is especially intense, keeping game play hot as you work the ramps and drop targets. One nice touch on all the tables is the tiny bumper between and just below the flippers. It can prevent a ball from draining down the middle of the board, and helps keep the game going just a little bit longer — very helpful when you've only got three balls per game.

The table graphics aren't as busy as *Eight Ball Deluxe*; in fact, they're a little plain, especially when you consider all the racy back-glasses of pinball games both past and present. But these tables were designed solely for the PC, and are per-





Graveyard

fectly suited for the task at hand — the game objectives stand out as clear as day. And if you need a tip, a ticker at the bottom of the screen provides tips and game info.

Pinball Dreams has a few quirks. The ball never comes to a complete stop when you cradle it with the flipper — no big deal, but still a little disquieting. The "M" key is supposed to toggle the music on and off, but it never worked for me. There seemed to be a discrepancy in the strengths of the two flippers, an anomaly two other players in our offices also encountered. And, as with *Eight Ball Deluxe*, I'd love to be able to look back and forth from the cradled ball to an upper target by scrolling the view, allowing me to line up shots more precisely, as well as see all the players' final scores simultaneously.

But don't get the wrong idea — this is one fantastic game. And it's the only pinball game that can accommodate up to eight players. If you like pinball, you can't go wrong with *Pinball Dreams*.

Silverball

Rating:

MicroLeague Interactive used to be known as **MicroLeague Sports**, but with its new name the company began branching out into other genres. Most of these new efforts were OK, but none really stood out — until now. *Silverball*, a pinball game with four tables designed from scratch for the PC, might be the surprise title of the year. It's certainly the best-looking and best-sounding of all the pinball games I played.

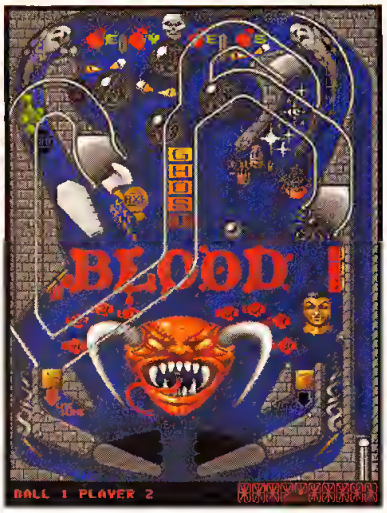
Silverball has nearly as many options as *Eight Ball Deluxe*: You can choose low, normal, or high table angle; play three or five balls per game; toggle sound effects and music; and if your



Odyssey

PC isn't a hot-rod machine, there's a "slow PC" option that helps smooth out the animation.

Like *Pinball Dreams*, each table has a unique theme and layout. "Fantasy" has a sword-and-sorcery motif, with skulls, candles, and a book of parchments that animates beautifully when you nail it with the ball. You'll journey into a dark, brooding world of horror with



Blood

"Blood" — coffins, ghosts, and black cats are scattered about this two-ramp table, which centers on a horned demon that looks like the heavy-metal band Danzig's mascot. "Snooker Champ," the only table in the bunch without a ramp, has all the trappings of an old-timey pool hall, while "Odyssey" is chock-full of mythological creatures and heros.

Regardless of which table you enjoy playing, you'll be stunned at the artwork in all the games here. The colors are rich and vibrant, the images rich in detail — the whole package is a graphic tour-de-force. Some games have pop-up animations that give you hints on secret bonuses, or that make you aware of special scoring features.

The sound effects and music are also stunning. Each game has an appropriate soundtrack, and they all sound as if they were composed by highly skilled professional musicians. The player-piano music of "Snooker Champ" will convince you that you're in a saloon as you aim for the drop targets, while the



Snooker Champ

brooding, gothic theme for "Blood" is as good as the music I've heard in many horror movies!



Fantasy

Game play isn't quite as sharp or fast as in *Eight Ball Deluxe* or *Pinball Dreams*; ball movement seems to be deadened rather than accelerated by the upper-table thumpers, though the slingshot bumpers tend to get thing moving at a pretty good clip, especially if you're playing with a high table angle. Secret doors and bonuses are greatly appreciated, and add a nice twist to the action. Flipper control is crisp, but in *Silverball*, as in *Pinball*

HE'S HERE, ON CD-ROM

If you don't find him, he'll find you!

FUN VISION

Mad Dog McCree™

Shooting Game



The Arcade Smash Hit by AMERICAN™ LASER GAMES, INC

LIVE MOTION PICTURE ACTION™

Product Information Number 135



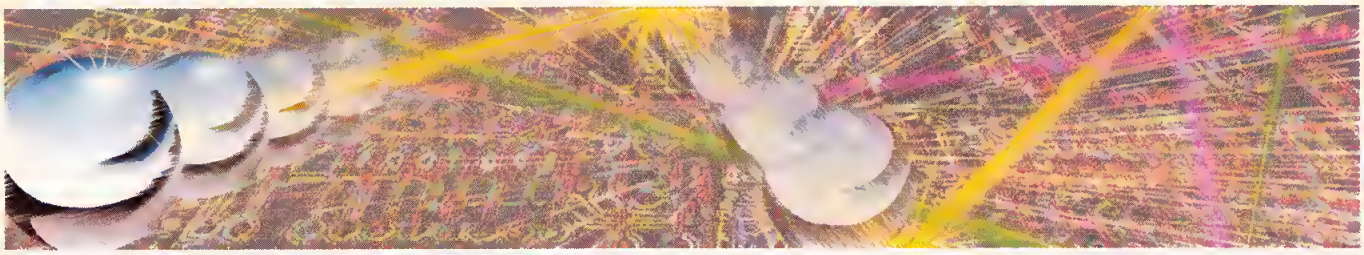




Mad Dog McCree is known worldwide as one of the highest rated arcade games and is the first interactive shooting game with real live motion picture action. Mad Dog and his men have kidnapped the town's mayor and his daughter. To save the town, you will be challenged by a saloon full of outlaws, a hair-raising bank robbery, gunfighters, a slew of Old West ambushes, and Mad Dog himself.

Call 1-800-758-HOME or visit your local retailer

A licensed product from American Laser Games published by International Business Machines Corporation © Copyright American Laser Games 1990, 1993. © Copyright International Business Machines Corporation, 1993. All rights reserved. Mad Dog McCree is a trademark of American Laser Games. Funsation is a trademark of International Business Machines Corporation.



Dreams, the ball never comes to a complete stop when cradled with the flipper.

This is one heckuva game, made even more impressive when you consider this is the first game of its type that MicroLeague has published. And there's more good news — Epic and MicroLeague have teamed up to produce "Nova," an add-on table for *Silverball* owners. We've played a preview version, and it looks to be just as good as the tables in the *Silverball* package. Our hats are off to MicroLeague and Epic for putting so much time and care into this package — great job!

Take-A-Break! Pinball For Windows

Rating:

The second installment in the "Take-A-Break" series, *Pinball For Windows* from **Dynamix** crams eight different pinball tables into one package. All are flavored with characters and settings from Sierra games like *Leisure Suit Larry*, *King's Quest 5*, *Space Quest IV*, and *The Adventures of Willy Beamish*, as well as *Nova 9* from Dynamix.



Quest For Daventry

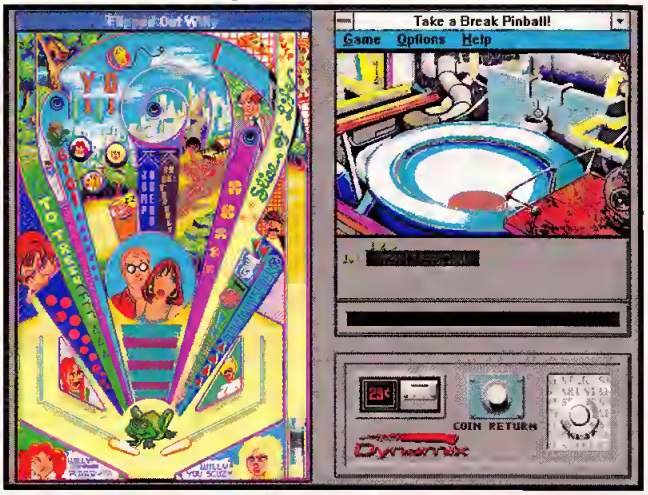
Instead of a scrolling table, Dynamix opted for a proportionately smaller machine, all of it contained on half the screen. The remaining space is shared by an interface containing a few controls (coin slot, start button), an "electronic billboard" that displays hints (and insults!), and a graphic window runs brief animated clips of characters and scenes from the Sierra or Dynamix adventure that's the setting for that particular table.

Humorous things happen in *Pinball for Windows*: pterodactyls fly across the screen and gobble the ball in "Planet Pinball 2" (*Space Quest V*); in "Quest for Daventry" (*King's Quest V*) a yeti tosses the ball into a "water hazard," where it temporarily submerges before returning to play; and if you hit the right target in "Flipped Out Willy" (*Willy Beamish*), a picture of a toilet being flushed appears in the graphic window.

Unfortunately, humor isn't enough — *Pinball For Windows* just doesn't cut it as a pinball game. For one thing, it's nearly impossible to track the ball. At 320 x 200 resolution, the half-screen table is very small (you should see it at 640 x 480!), and the tables are often so overloaded with colorful artwork that you can't even find the teeny-tiny ball zipping around. But as busy as the tables are graphically, they're actually pretty barren when it comes to bumpers, drop targets, and rollover lanes. There just isn't a lot to do, even if you could keep up with the ball.

The ball animation is choppy, even on a 486/50MHz, and if you're using the mouse to control the flippers it's all too easy to inadvertently pause the game by clicking to the right of the table. Keyboard control allows "grunching," or nudging, the table left or right — but you don't *see* the table move like in other pinball games, nor can you discern any real effect on ball movement. The animations in the graphic window are nice, but let's face it — if you're concentrating on the game, you don't have a lot of time to sit back and enjoy a cartoon.

Pinball for Windows has some interesting concepts, and Windows-users hungry for games might be tempted to give it a try. Hardcore pinball fans, however, will want to steer clear of this one.



Flipped Out Willy



Draxon (Level Two)



Larry's Big Score

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons COMPUTER 2nd Edition GAME

FORGOTTEN REALMS

DUNGEON HACK™

HACK YOUR WAY THROUGH THE DUNGEONS OF YOUR NIGHTMARES!

There's only one thing better than wielding wits and weapons in a danger-filled AD&D® dungeon adventure — and that's wielding them in *limitless danger-filled dungeon adventures!* Which is what you get in *DUNGEON HACK.*™

With the randomized dungeon generator, custom set-ups *and over 4 billion possible dungeons,* no two games need ever be alike!

This single-character AD&D fantasy role-playing adventure is easy to use. Generate your character from 6 races and 12 character classes (including multi-classed), select dungeon difficulty, and off you go! Auto-mapping charts your explorations with printable maps. Passwords let you re-use favorite dungeons or let your friends generate the same dungeons in their game. Want more? Digitized sound effects and 256-color VGA graphics make *DUNGEON HACK* an experience you'll treasure — over and over again!

IBM
& COMPATIBLES
CD-ROM AVAILABLE

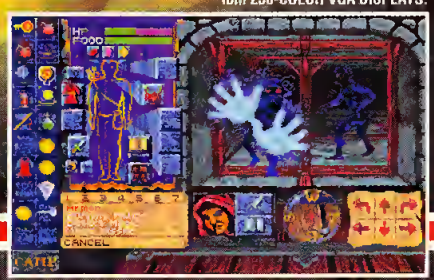
To order, visit your retailer or call: 1-800-245-4525 with VISA/MC (U.S. & Canada only).

© 1993 TSR, Inc.
© 1993 Strategic Simulations, Inc.
All rights reserved.

Product Information Number 113



IBM 256-COLOR VGA DISPLAYS.



ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, DUNGEON HACK, FORGOTTEN REALMS, the TSR logo and all TSR characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by and used under license from TSR, Inc.



ALTERNATE LIVES

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

NEIL RANDALL

Computer role-playing games have reached a crossroads — and no matter which direction they take, it's time for a change.

I usually discuss specific role-playing games in this column, with comments about the state of role-playing games scattered throughout. But this time out I'm going to focus solely on the genre. The reason is simple: As the title above suggests, I think computer role-playing has come to a crossroads. But as in real life — and contrary to the norm in most computer RPGs — there's no indication of which direction is best. Some companies will try one road, while some will try another. Maybe five years from now we'll know who made the right choice.

As I see it, there are four directions RPG designers might take. The first is to follow the path familiar to most current developers: Use today's superior graphics, sound, interface designs, and testing methods to make RPGs look great, sound great, and play comfortably and easily — but make no fundamental changes in the *nature* of RPGs. Players will continue to work their way from point to point by defeating increasingly difficult monsters and solving harder puzzles, with designers hoping no one will question the logic of a dungeon that houses countless creatures great and small. These games will still have the player take on the roles of ethically barren adventurers who would rather face six red dragons than simply use their immense powers to rob a million or so farthings from the evil slavelord around the corner.

A second direction would involve employing rapidly emerging virtual reality technology to develop rich, complex worlds for players to discover, with designers concentrating their efforts on creating an illusion of realism. So, as a member of a planetary exploration party, you won't just be *told* you're surrounded by hostile aliens. You'll look around and *see* them surrounding you. The complexity and importance of the game's story probably won't be much greater than it is today; instead, the focus will be on thrusting you into an unknown world that looks and sounds incredibly realistic. These games will be long and detailed, their strength based on how completely they immerse the player in their worlds.

A third path would take RPGs down the road toward interactive cinema, with the focus on storytelling rather than world-building. While virtual reality may play a part in such RPGs, the primary technologies and techniques will come from the world of filmmaking. Essentially, players will take on the role of a movie character, actively participating in a story whose direction is convincingly controlled by the game's director and producer. As in the second direction I mentioned above, illusion will be of primary importance. But here, the illusion created is that of being inside a motion picture. These games may well be short, but packed with event after event — an evening-long entertainment, just like a long movie. Their purpose will be to attract a mass audience, and as they do their prices will drop dramatically.

The fourth and final direction would be to backtrack, at least in some respects: Decrease the emphasis on rich sound and graphics, and instead ask players to rely on their imaginations. This is what non-computer RPGs (such as the original Dungeons and Dragons) are so good at, and exactly what no computer RPG has done as successfully. Design efforts here will undoubtedly center on the concept of the multi-player experience; players might be linked by modem, sitting in the same room together, or (more likely) a combination of both. This type of game will return the emphasis in RPGs to role playing, with rewards and advancement going to players who play their characters well.



Origin's Richard Garriott

The computer's function will be to link players and to provide worlds and storylines. In other words, the game will be the Dungeon Master, taking that onerous task out of the hands of the players.

Obviously, these aren't mutually exclusive possibilities — but they're probably the only possibilities. The question now is, will one of these four new approaches dominate the others, as the dungeon-and-monster game has dominated until now? Or will we, the players, give all of them a chance? As a whole, we role-players haven't been very receptive to new ideas.

Richard Garriott, designer of the Ultima series, says that the market for RPGs "has remained largely unchanged over the past few years." A top-10 game sells about 100,000 copies, he explains, and 250,000 is generally as high as sales go. The numbers were about the same a few years ago.

But even though the market hasn't increased, Garriott says, the cost of development has increased dramatically. "So we either have to make product development cheaper — and that's an option I don't like — or increase the size of the audience." Garriott estimates that the hard-core role-playing audience is limited to about 100,000 people, and that this number could be vastly increased if RPGs are developed as, solid, well-directed stories.

The key word here is *well-directed*. "A good movie is a good movie because the story is paced by the director," Garriott says. "But the problem with a classical RPG is that you can't direct it. My belief is that the game that will appeal to broad-based America is a well-directed game. If you have a great story to tell, you have to be able to control it." As a result, he sees the RPG of the future as being both movie and RPG. The challenge is in figuring out the right balance.

It's clear that Garriott sees the interactive cinema paradigm — my third category — I mentioned ealier as the key to the success of future RPGs. In fact, it was talking with him that suggested this category. I've seen the idea of interactive cinema incorporated into graphic adventures, but not in RPGs. It makes sense, though; why should RPGs be long, complex, and largely undirected (or at least perceived as such — most are too linear to be truly undirected).

Joel Billings, president of SSI (publishers of the AD&D series and other RPG lines) recognizes the importance of complex storylines in RPGs, but acknowledges that "story products are the hardest to design and test." His vision of the future mixes two fundamental ideas: virtual reality and multi-player gaming. A combination, in other words, of some of the ideas in my second and third categories.

"Think about virtual-reality-based multi-player RPGs," Billings says. "The idea would be a VR setup, hooked by modem with people in different places. They would be a party, but not actually be together. It's not that far away — maybe five years, maybe less. Right now, people don't play over the modem because it's both difficult and expensive. You can do it right now on the Sierra Network, or with Neverwinter Nights (an AD&D RPG on America On-Line), but the technology isn't quite there and the phone costs are high."



SSI's Joel Billings

But if a modem-reliant technology like 3DO becomes the hub of a new kind of home entertainment center, and with all the other cable and telephone advances either here or just around the corner, Billings thinks the idea is definitely on its way.

The most important point for Billings is the social nature of role-playing games. He points out that the original, paper-and-pencil Dungeons & Dragons "was a social thing. People got together in a room and worked towards a common goal. The restriction has always been getting those people together in that room." It's a restriction modems can solve, when using your modem becomes as easy as using your phone.

Both Garriott and Billings are counting on technological advances if their views are to be realized. Garriott sees a need for a truly interactive, cinematic technology; Billings is looking for something like the proposed superdata highway, with a healthy dose of VR as well. But both, importantly, also realize that new technologies aren't enough. For Garriott, the future of gaming depends on storytelling, a technology as old as human speech. For Billings, the future relies on the fact that humans are social creatures — and that's as old as the species itself.

If we don't give new role-playing concepts a chance, the trend toward formulaic, uninventive games will continue.

None of this, of course, is going to happen overnight. The next couple of years will see a spate of games that fall into the first category, and those of us who already enjoy bullying our way through dungeons (or thinly disguised dungeons) will continue to do so. But we owe it to the future of the genre to do one important thing: support new RPG designs and new concepts. Don't write off a game because it doesn't do what you *expected* it to do — a habit several RPGers I've read on Compuserve and GEnie have clearly fallen into. Instead, determine what the game is *trying* to do, decide if it does it well, and finally if doing it was worthwhile. If we don't give new concepts a chance the genre will stagnate, and RPGs will continue their trend toward the type of formulaic, uninventive product that characterizes network television.



EXTENDED PLAY

ADD-ONS • SCENARIO DISKS • UPGRADES • BUG PATCHES

MiG-29: DOUBLE YOUR PLEASURE, DOUBLE YOUR FUN

T. LIAM MCDONALD



MiG-29

Americans tend to think of the phrase "Russian technical achievement" as an oxymoron, believing that (as is often the case) the Russians are hardly high-tech. But such conceit can hardly extend to the jets of Mikoyan-Gerevich, which have long proven worthy adversaries for American hardware in hotspots like Korea and Viet Nam. In particular, the agile MiG-29 Fulcrum, designed specifically for interception and dogfighting, is an unparalleled fighter in close-quarters. Extraordinary maneuverability, extreme angles of attack (up to 80 degrees!), passive target acquisition, a helmet-mounted aiming monocle, and the most accurate cannon in the air make it a fierce air threat.

Such news comes as no surprise to flight-sim aficionados, who often encounter MiGs — much to their regret. In particular, **Spectrum HoloByte's** *Falcon 3.0* serves up a wave after wave of deadly MiGs to make missions particularly challenging.

Now *Falcon* owners can swap seats with their Soviet counterparts, thanks to the latest addition to Spectrum Holobyte's Electronic Battlefield Series. *MiG-29: Deadly Adversary Of Falcon 3.0*. *MiG-29* allows you to fly all the *Falcon* missions (including those in *Operation Fighting Tiger*) from the enemy's perspective. And in doing so, this add-on disk actually introduces an entirely new flight model into the *Falcon* equation, actually creating two sims in one.

MiG-29 is a spectacular achievement in flight simulation, if only because the flight model bears so little resemblance to anything we've seen before. The extremely sensitive controls take some getting used to, but once you adjust for the very different feel of the MiG-29 you'll delight in the unique aerodynamics and outrageous acrobatic capabilities of this plane. This isn't just a fancy flier, either: its arsenal is formidable. The laser-sighted cannon can be set to automatically fire once a target is aligned. The passive, infra-red targeting helps reduce radar emissions drastically, allowing the Fulcrum to get in close, where its strengths can best be exploited. When the helmet-mounted system is activated in the now-familiar padlock view, the fire control computer tracks whichever target you're looking at through the monocle.

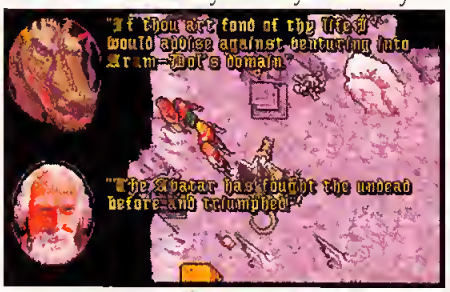
This addition to the *Falcon* family seems to have a few problems, though. Many are reporting serious joystick problems, including unusual sensitivity and poor centering. This may be due in part to the MiG's unique flight dynamics, but enough seasoned flight sim buffs have spoken up to make the problem worth noting. It's not an easy sim to fly, and will be particularly difficult for people used to the fly-by-wire F-16. But *MiG-29* rewards patience with some scorching action.

The Silver Seed

Origin Systems claims to be the first game designer to create an add-on disk for a role-playing game. *Forge of Virtue* (for use with *Ultima VII: The Black Gate*) gave gamers new worlds to explore and new items and abilities to help in their quest. *Ultima VII, Part Two: Serpent Isle* is the excellent sequel to *Ultima VII*, and now it too has an add-on disk. *The Silver Seed* loads into the original game seamlessly — but now, when you travel to Monk Isle to see Karnax, you can access a whole new world.

Actually it's an *old* world, since choosing the word "discovery" in your conversation with Karnax transports you into Serpent Isle's past. (This pathway into *Silver Seed* never worked for me, but I was able to get there using the Serpent Gate.) Once in this past world, you'll explore The Order Keep (populated with automatons), an abandoned outpost, a maze, Aram-Dol's lair, and the fiend's lair, meeting the mysterious Dark Monks, a madman, a helpful dragon, and a host of monsters.

The point is to pump up your party and give them some new items and treasure. Among these items are: a key ring that allows you to try all the keys in your inventory on any lock with a single mouse click; a helm of light, which serves as a permanent light source; a ring supplying unlimited reagents for spells; a belt that adds ten points to your strength; and several other very useful items.



Silver Seed

The goal of this sub-quest

Introducing FLIGHTSTICK PRO.

It Blows Everything Else Out of the Sky.



FLIGHTSTICK PRO puts a whole new level of lethal accuracy and control in the palm of your hand. You sense the enemy. Click, click, click the stick... all clear behind and to the right – there, left front! You throttle down, activate radar, lock onto your target. Two enemy planes eat your cannon fire as you blast a missile toward the bridge ahead. Done. Full thrust, ease up and right, and you're clear of the explosive chaos below. And your hand never left the stick. Flightstick Pro – the newest and best jet stick on the market – it blows everything else out of the sky.

CH PRODUCTS

FLIGHTSTICK PRO™



CH Products • 970 Park Center Drive • Vista, Ca 92083 • 619-598-2518

Product Information Number 127

is to find the magic orbs and gain the Silver Seed. Once planted, the Silver Seed can help save Serpent Isle from destruction — though how it does so is never quite made clear. New hotkeys are also part of the package, reducing repetitious functions like eating, unlocking doors, picking locks, and checking the time to single keystrokes.

The Silver Seed is a must for *Serpent Isle* fans. You could finish the game without it, but it greatly adds to the game's playability, and it's a fair value. Of course, you have to wonder why these features weren't included in the original....

Snake Bit, and More

After **Access**'s somewhat disappointing *Belfry* Course for *Links 386 Pro*, *Innisbrook* is a refreshing change of pace. Challenging, attractive, and distinctive, the Copperhead Course at Innisbrook in Tarpon Springs, Florida, is a worthy addition to Access' impressive collection of add-ons.

Narrow, unforgiving fairways demand precise shots, while the serpentine twists of some holes call for precise placement and careful strategy. Thick beds of pine needles and heavy tree cover make the roughs particularly bothersome. The fifth, eleventh, twelfth, and sixteenth are the particularly difficult holes, and several others are also standouts. Copperhead course designer E. Lawrence Packard has a laugh on all of us with his very tricky fifteenth: an "invisible" water hazard placed just behind some shrubs, where it can't be seen!



Innisbrook Cooperhead Course

In the last issue, we reviewed **ICOM**'s updated *Deja Vu* games for Windows. Now they've added another classic, *The Uninvited*, to the Windows gaming lineup. A horror game before horror games were hip, *The Uninvited* drops you in front of a haunted house on a stormy night and dares you to enter. Though not a huge challenge, there is enough meat — and a few scares — to keep you hooked. Using multiple windows and enhanced 256-color graphics, *The Uninvited* is a great addition to the growing body of Windows games.



The Uninvited

Enhanced for CD

SSI has brought *Great Naval Battles of the North Atlantic* to CD-ROM. The title includes all three add-on disks (*America in the Atlantic*, *Superships of the Atlantic*, and *Scenario Builder*), along with a nicely enhanced soundtrack. There's also supposed to be some battle footage included, but I just can't seem to find it. One problem, though, is that the game doesn't really play from the disk: it requires about 12 megs of hard drive space.

Microprose has revamped three flight sims for CD-ROM release: *F-15 Strike Eagle III* adds a "video documentary" to this excellent game; *Gunship 2000* ships on a CD with the *Ice and Island* scenario add-on; and *Strike Eagle II* and *F-117* have been packaged on a single disc.

Return of the Phantom, also from Microprose, is now on CD-ROM with enhanced sound. The voice acting is rather hollow and uninspired, though, and the soundtrack hasn't been noticeably improved.

Microsoft Golf comes to CD-ROM with a wide array of new sound effects and video tutors. At various points, a Video for Windows box pops up and a male or female instructor tells you just why you're a lousy golfer! Actually, the instructional pieces are useful and well done, but could have been utilized more extensively.

Bug Patches

Editor's Note: Contact game publishers for info on bug patch availability.

Patriot may well have been the biggest disaster in **360 Pacific**'s history. Chock-full of bugs, sporting user-hostile documentation, and featuring faulty programming, design, and AI, this self-described "land version of *Harpoon*" has received plenty of criticism. But never let it be said that 360 abandons a product! The company has overhauled *Patriot* to such a degree that the "patch" (which is shipping free of charge to registered users) is actually a whole new game, and comes on three disks.

- *Patriot Version 1.1* includes a complete revamping of the programming models for air warfare, amphibious landing, land-based AAW, and artillery. The result is better AI and more control. Factual errors in the database have been corrected, map clutter reduced, map scale indicators and new maps added, and new scenarios included. Countless bugs — many involving crashes and memory conflicts — have been fixed. And a new supplemental manual goes a long way toward simplifying the obfuscation of the original. While *Patriot* still sports the fundamentally flawed design described in "The Desktop General" column of the May/June issue, it's now a better-working program, and deserves a second look from people aggravated by the glitches of the original.

Other new patches include:

- *Airbucks* V.1.21: Corrects lock-ups and incompatible mouse drivers.
- *Amazon*: A new .EXE file to allow the SoundBlaster Pro to use IRQ 10. A separate patch fixes troubles with getting the raft out of the box on the airplane.
- *Carriers at War Construction Kit*: Separate patches update version 2.00 to 2.02 and version 2.01a to 2.02.
- *King's Quest 6 CD*: Patch needed for Windows use at video resolutions higher than 640 x 480. If you were having difficulty making Prince Alexander walk off the bottom of the screen or pick up certain objects, this patch will help.
- *Lands of Lore*: The Throne of Chaos V.1.11: Fixes various bugs. A separate beta version of a patch allowing for multiple soundcards is also available.
- *Rules of Engagement 2 Campaign Disk* V.1.01: Adds nine new Breach 2 IGS links to the campaign "Operation Hammer." This update is only useful if you are playing the game in conjunction with Breach 2.
- *Take a Break Pinball*: Has an updated KQUEST.DLL file to correct a problem in the Quest for Daventry game, in which the ball becomes invisible after entering the Endless Desert Temple Stone Wall Trap.
- *V for Victory: Utah Beach* V.2.0: Is the only version that can be brought into the single-menu battleset system of the latter games. A 3.1 patch is also available for people who don't own the latter games, bringing the play enhancements of *Velikiye Luki* and *Market Garden* to *Utah Beach*.

Same lightning quick action as the NHL. Don't blink.





The only computer game tough enough to require these licenses.



Trophies like Hart, Smythe, Ross, Calder, and, of course, Lord Stanley himself.



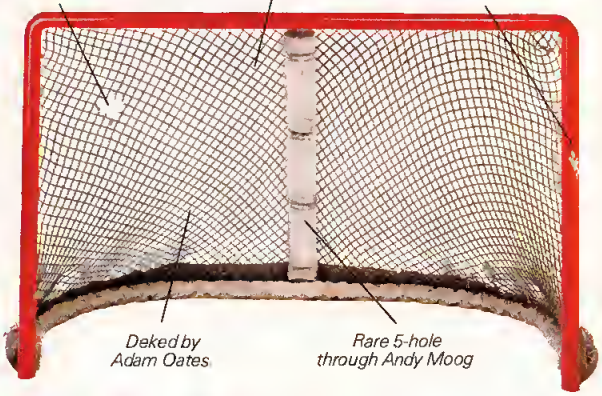
Howitzer from Steve Yzerman

Unfortunate meeting with Tie Domi

Collision with Zamboni



Digitized sound including Ron Barr's voice, rink organ, and very loud hits. Very loud.



Deked by Adam Oates

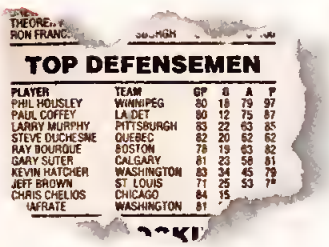
Rare 5-hole through Andy Moog







Actual NHL players and teams represented here by authentic jerseys. Note the skating zebra.



Historical stats. Cumulative stats. A coach's dream. Or nightmare.



Instant replay to relive the highlights. Say hello to Pavel Bure.



Full season mode guarantees at least a couple of meetings with Bob Probert.

If it's in the game, it's in the game™

EA SPORTS
ELECTRONIC ARTS

Product Information Number 140

If you still can't imagine what it's like to play this game, rip out this ad, tape it to a concrete wall, then hurl your body against it.



Finally, real NHL Hockey for your IBM or compatible

EA SPORTS and the EA SPORTS logo are trademarks of Electronic Arts. NHLPA, National Hockey League Players' Association and the names of all NHL teams are trademarks of the NHLPA and are used under license by Electronic Arts. NHL and the logo of the NHL are trademarks of the NHL and are used under license by Electronic Arts.



THE DESKTOP GENERAL

THE SECOND COMING OF THE SECOND FRONT: GARY GRIGSBY'S WAR IN RUSSIA

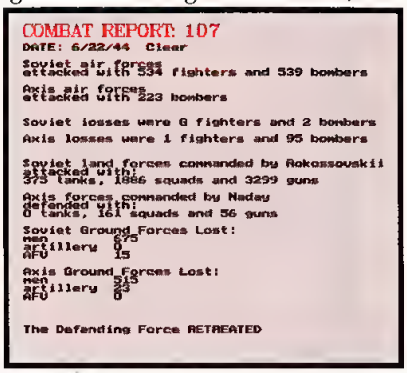
WILLIAM R. TROTTER



We keep coming back to the Russian Front, we war gamers. It seizes our imaginations at the hour of our first acquaintance and never relinquishes its hold. It exerts a basilisk-like pull on mind and heart. Probably no other conflict has been the subject of so many war games, and certainly not so many good ones.

Part of the attraction, of course, is the sheer scale of the thing; it is probably the only event in modern history that approaches a true Apocalypse. In terms of size, ferocity, and impact on the future of civilization, no other campaign in WWII comes close. This was a fight to the death between the biggest army ever seen on this planet and the best-led, most professional army ever created; between two totalitarian regimes, each of whose very existence was largely predicated on the extermination of the other; between generals who believed that technology and superior training could offset sheer numbers, and generals whose souls did not flinch before casualty figures that would have toppled any Western government overnight.

It was a war with a front stretching 1200 miles, from the windswept fells of Lapland to the majestic peaks of the Caucasus, where the most mechanized army in the world was supplied by packtrains of camels driven by bandoliered tribesmen who looked as though they'd step-ped from a 19th-century engraving. The ebb and flow of its campaigns was like a cycle of tidal waves, devouring hundreds of miles and turning great cities into smoldering heaps of rubble. In all, 350 divisions fought on both sides, with a savagery that produced more battlefield deaths in any given *week* than the United States suffered during the entire European campaign.



But beyond the drama, the Russian campaign grips wargamers because it was, at several crucial points, such a close-run contest; indeed, a convincing case can still be made that, if it had not been for Hitler's increasingly deranged interference, the German generals could have almost certainly won the day—with staggering consequences for future history.

No game designer has been more obsessed with the Russian Campaign than Gary Grigsby, to the extent that his preoccupation has become almost visionary. Consider the list of games he's created on the subject: *Eastern Front* (1982),



All Pros. No Cons.



You're down by six and Junior Seau just sacked you again. Now it's 4th and 18 with only a minute to go. Should you go long to Sterling Sharpe, or dump it in the flat to Thurman Thomas? In *Unnecessary Roughness*,™ it's your call. But don't worry. You've got all the NFLPA™ pros you'd ever need to build your team. Like "Neon" Deion Sanders. John Taylor. Dr Michael Irvin. And if they're not enough weapons for you, you'll also have a playbook that's thicker than a lineman's head. *Unnecessary Roughness* also features rotoscoped player graphics. Plus a rotating 3-D game orientation with infinite camera views that actually put you down on the field. Meanwhile, up in the booth Al Michaels handles the play-by-play, making this football game as real as you can get. Without getting hit, at least. *Available for the IBM PC and 100% compatibles. To score yours, rush to your favorite retailer or call 1-800-245-7744.*

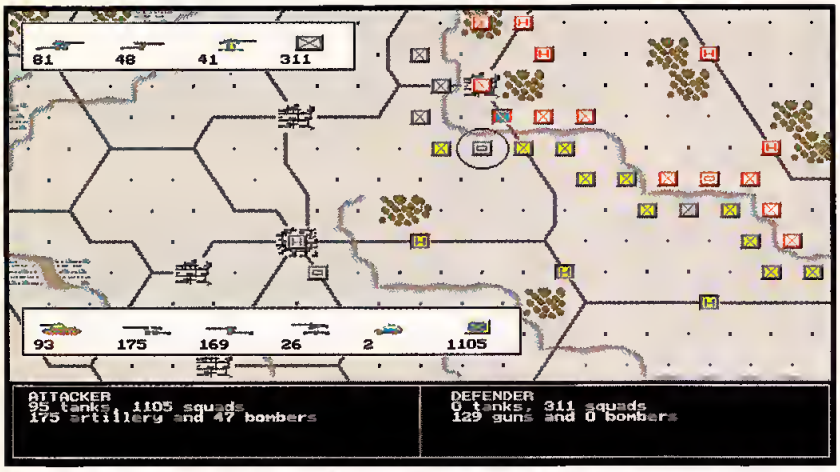
NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE PLAYERS

AL MICHAELS CALLS THE SHOTS

© 1993 Accolade, Inc. All rights reserved. NFLPA is a trademark of the National Football League Players Association and is used under license, by Accolade, Inc. Logo and name © NFLPA 1993. Unnecessary Roughness is a trademark of Accolade, Inc and is officially licensed by the National Football League Players Association. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are properties of their respective owners.

ACCOLADE™
GAMES WITH PERSONALITY

Product Information Number 128



Kampfgruppe (1985), *Kampfgruppe Scenario Add-On* (1986), *Panzer Strike* (1988), *Second Front* (1990) and now *War In Russia*, a simulation that contains the distilled essence of years of study, even of meditation.

Many readers are no doubt asking: if I already have *Second Front*, and have played it to death, should I buy *War In Russia*? The answer is not a simple "yes" or "no." If the earlier game fully satisfied your interest in the Russian campaign, then the incremental refinements, enhancements, and scenario-editing capabilities of *War In Russia* may not be worth the hefty price (MSRP: $79.95) of admission.

If you're a war-gamer who hasn't yet been bitten by the Russian-Front bug, but are about to take the plunge — and who's noticed that *Second Front* is available for half the cost of this new game — I strongly urge you to save your pennies until you can afford *War in Russia*. For all its complexity, *War in Russia* strikes me as being *easier* to get into than *Second Front*. For one thing, the manual is much clearer and more detailed; back in 1990, SSI's designers subscribed to the Real-Men-Don't-Need-Tutorials school of thought, and there was an unconscionable amount of knowledge that could only be acquired by stumbling through game after game.

For another thing, *War in Russia* gives you about twice as much game for your dollar. The graphics are much improved, the sound effects, while nothing fancy, add significantly to the gaming gestalt, and there is a brooding synthesizer arrangement of Mussorgsky that makes a perfect soundtrack.

Beyond the bells and whistles, though, you get more scenarios, game play that is finer-grained and more elegant, and a Scenario-Editing utility that will make Russian-Front addicts think their own private Millennium has dawned.

In fact, the brief section of the manual devoted to the Scenario Editor does not begin to convey its power. Before messing with it, *do* consult the README file for a much fuller explanation. There are also three programmed scenarios not mentioned in the manual but explained in the README text: "Campaign '44" covers the devastating Russian onslaught against Army Group Center, July-August 1944; "Operation Uranus" uses only the southern half of the map, starting with the great counterattack at Stalingrad in November '42 and running to March '43, when the Red Army juggernaut ran out of steam; and "Bagration," which uses the northern half of the map, covers the summer months of 1944, and depicts events from Leningrad, through the Baltic states, eastward toward Minsk.

Other changes: New HQ and control rules clearly derived from the system used in *Pacific War*; more realistic difficulty in transferring units (bad news, I'm afraid, for the Wehrmacht player!); and considerably more detail in the handling of air forces and in their ability, when properly deployed, to wallop the enemy. If too many units are stacked in the same hex, a state of disorganization now occurs, with deleterious consequences to the combat-readiness of the troops involved. And unlike *Second Front*, it is no longer possible for a single corps to successfully attack an entrenched enemy unit of comparable size, except during the Germans' "blitzkrieg" period in the war's opening months. Other subtle differences will no doubt become apparent as I spend more time with the program — the initial overall feeling is that of a basically sound engine that has been fine-tuned by a master mechanic.

The thought occurs to me that Gary Grigsby may well be the Tolstoy of game designers. With *War in Russia*, he succeeds in capturing the epic sweep and strategic complexity of the Russian Front's campaigns, yet when the game is set on its most detailed level of information display, he also conveys the ask-no-quarter bloodiness, the stupendous cost of these battles in lives and equipment.

It is also possible to view *War In Russia* as one might view the latest and most ambitious novel in an author's entire oeuvre. Certainly the "Grigsby Interface" is as recognizable, and as personal, as the literary style of a Tolstoy or even a Faulkner.

This game stands in relation to Grigsby's earlier Russian Front projects just as a great writer's final draft of a novel stands in relation to its earlier versions. The improvements are not so much apparent in the overall shape and structure of the work — the main themes and their development are still recognizably the same — but the cumulative effect of many revised details renders the total opus more polished, more note-perfect in tone, even more inevitable in the power of its statements.

The verdict? This Russian-Front addict suspects that *War In Russia* will become a landmark in the history of computer war games.

With *War in Russia*, Gary Grigsby captures the epic sweep and strategic complexity of the Russian Front campaigns — and still manages to convey the ask-no-quarter bloodiness of the individual battles.



SSI, 675 Almanor Ave., Suite 201, Sunnyvale CA 94086-2901

Pilot The Navy's First Line Of Defense.



Actual screens may vary.

FLEET DEFENDER™

The F-14 Tomcat Simulation!

It's all up to you! The skies are swarming with bandits. Only you stand between the threat and your carrier battle group.

Lock on your radar and launch the Navy's advanced weapons to destroy the most sophisticated enemy targets ever developed for a MicroProse simulation. Roll, turn, climb, and dive to out-maneuver enemy aircraft using an artificial intelligence developed right out of Soviet and Third World military doctrine.

A computer-controlled wingman responds to your every command. And, you'll interact with strike packages that include F/A-18 Hornets, A-6 Intruders, A-7 Corsairs and E-2C Hawkeye AWACS.

Featuring the latest in 3-D terrain technology derived from digitized information taken from LANDSAT geological surveys, you'll pilot your F-14 through actual locations.

Fleet Defender from MicroProse. We brought you the F-15 Strike Eagle, now try the F-14 Tomcat featuring the most authentically modeled F-14 systems available anywhere outside of the Navy.

MICROPROSE®
ENTERTAINMENT • SOFTWARE

© 1993 MicroProse Software, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
For IBM-PC/Compatibles.

To get our free catalog, call 1-800-879-PLAY Mon.-Fri., 8:30 am - 5:00 pm EST or fill out the coupon and mail it to: MicroProse Software, Inc., 180 Lakefront Drive • Dept. D10 • Hunt Valley, MD 21030-2245

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

BAT

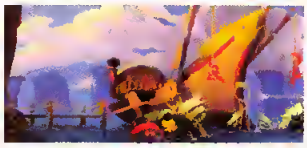
Product Information Number 221



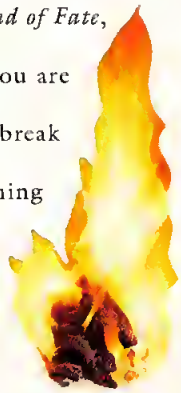
FABLES & FIENDS: THE HAND OF FATE IS A TRADEMARK OF WESTWOOD STUDIOS, INC. © 1993 WESTWOOD STUDIOS, INC. VIRGIN IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF VIRGIN ENTERPRISES, LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

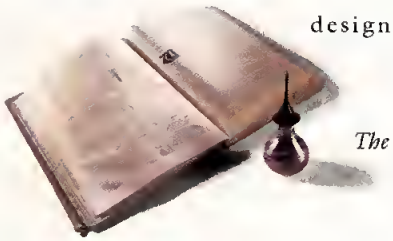
Kiss Conventional Logic Goodbye

Now you see it. Now you don't. The land of Kyrandia is disappearing piece by piece and all the evidence points toward one perilous conclusion: a curse. Thus begins *The Hand of Fate*, second in the *Fables & Fiends*™ series, where you are the offbeat, young mystic who must voyage to the center of the world to break the spell. Out of sync and out on foot, your aberrant journey reveals nothing is what it seems. Everything is what it isn't. And you can count your friends on one hand. Literally. Conspiring to push the twisted edge of cinemagraphic entertainment, Westwood Studios has designed more puzzles and gameplay in the first few chapters of *The Hand of Fate* than in all of *The Legend of Kyrandia*™. The most advanced graphics on the market are first pencil tested, then painted on-screen to surrealistic perfection. Breakthrough *Trulight* technology illuminates each scene more cinematically for a fuller, fourth dimensional picture. The new *State of Mind System*, along with superior intuitive interfacing, enables you and over 50 characters to change your mind, mood and mayhem based on preceding events. Don't just play with your mind. Change the way your mind plays. Grasp *The Hand of Fate* and kiss conventional logic goodbye.











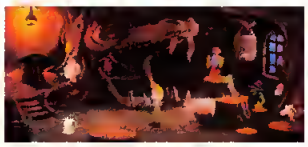




Shadow



Sunlight



THE HAND OF FATE™

Westwood STUDIOS

DISTRIBUTED EXCLUSIVELY BY Virgin

Product Information Number 116

SEAL TEAM

Category: Combat Simulation

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: Electronic Arts

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386 or better Hard drive VGA graphics	Disk-caching utility Supported sound cards

South Vietnam in the autumn of 1967. Night in the Rung Sat. Hot, close, jungle night. Huge nocturnal bugs whirl past your head. Beads of sweat course down the greasy layer of green-face camouflage covering your features. Over the distant treeline, a flare arcs momentarily into the sky, fired from some God-forsaken Mekong Delta outpost, reminding you that the war is always just a split second away, that death is as close as a second's hesitation, a single miscalculation, the smallest interval of confusion.

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

I shall not presume to pass judgment on the nuts-and-bolts realism of Electronic Arts' new *SEAL Team* simulation; only a veteran of real SEAL operations would be qualified to do that. But after my recent tours of game-duty with this small-unit combat simulation, I'm convinced that it comes closer than any other in my experience to providing a gaming atmosphere that plausibly conveys some measure of the tension, fear, and adrenalized rush of real-life clandestine military operations.



The first time I led my four-man SEAL team into an actual mission insertion (as opposed to the practice missions you need to go through to have a fair chance of surviving the real thing), the mood — seemingly the very texture of the game experience — changed subtly but powerfully. I switched from the attractively cinematic Team View to the Point-Man View, and immediately felt my pulse quicken. As I peered into the dark foliage, trying to decide if that shape now visible to the west was a civilian hooch or the shoulder of a Viet Cong bunker, I felt a sudden and very real need to swivel my "head" and make sure the other members of the team were still behind me; the full impact of the term "point man" hit me like an RPG round. My God," I thought, "this is the loneliest place in the world!

The more missions I went through, the more convinced I was by the tone and attitude of this simulation. Incidents flashed like lightning-strikes and seared the memory: The man I cut down with my Stoner machine gun a split second before his hands went up in surrender (even before I felt a small lurch of guilt, I could hear my more experienced comrades reminding me that "Dead VC don't talk! A prisoner is always worth more than a corpse!"); the pajama-clad farmer who strode by



my hiding place, clearly identifiable as a "civilian," but who emerged from a hut 30 seconds later carrying an AK-47.

Most of all, I remember the time I excitedly took my first prisoner. On the way back to our extraction point, the team was suddenly embroiled in a firefight — and because I'd forgotten to bring a prisoner-handling kit, my captive took advantage of the confusion to escape into the jungle, only to pop back up a few seconds later and kill me with a single, point-blank shot.

Experiences like these give a whole new meaning to the term "learning curve," and are indicative of the thought and care that have gone into this simulation. The default historical setting is 1 February 1966, and the game clock runs out in late 1969 — about the same time the real SEAL teams began to concentrate more on training their erstwhile South Vietnamese replacements and less on actual combat missions. There are 20 missions per year, covering all the basic categories of SEAL activity: patrolling and information-gathering, ambushing, demolitions, rescue of friendly POWS or downed pilots, and "snatches" of enemy personnel or equipment.





All 80 missions can be played or practiced individually, but the real emotional power of the game kicks in when you sign up for a full campaign. Brief biographies of you and your comrades create a highly credible illusion of existence, as do the graphic portraits. These guys aren't inflated-bicep Rambo supermen wearing bloodthirsty, macho scowls. Instead, these men look fit, well-trained, but basically just like ordinary young Americans. Their eyes don't blaze with warlike zeal, but seem deep-set with wariness and determination to survive. When one of them dies, you may actually feel a pang — especially if your mistake or poor judgement contributed to his demise. Any computer game which can generate this kind of response is remarkable indeed.



Mouse control is fluid and reasonably intuitive. I personally found the simulation just as easy to control with keyboard commands — indeed, it made movements seem even more crisp and precise. A joystick is also supported, but that mode of control just didn't feel right.

The skillfully designed interface makes it easy to control the posture and formation of your teams, enabling them to advance stealthily in a prone position, move in a crouch, or rush forward when they need to cover ground quickly. Firearms deployment, demolitions, and grenade-throwing are each accomplished with a simple keystroke or mouse-click. You can even split your team into two or three sections, issue independent orders to each, and have them regroup at any waypoint you choose.



Run into a hornets' nest and you can order emergency evacuation, medical dust-off flights, or backup firepower from either an on-station helicopter or a riverine gunboat. The best way to avoid being bushwhacked is to learn how to use silence, stealth, and concealment. In *SEAL Team*, you can actually take cover behind any suitable object, natural or man-made, just as you would in reality. If a VC grenade lands in the midst of your team, you can hit the Q key and everyone dives for the nearest cover. And if you don't maintain situational awareness while you're doing these things, you can also fall into a pit lined with punji stakes — a painful and embarrassing way to wind up a casualty.



While the graphics are nothing special, they have a pleasing and consistent three-dimensional quality, and the firefights are lively, with flashing tracers, realistic explosions, and crumpling bodies. If the first-person point of view doesn't let you savor the action as much as you'd like, there are multiple external views of both your squad and the enemy that can be accessed quickly and simply.

Digitized footage of actual SEALS is featured in the pre- and post-mission "bull sessions," during which the veteran team members sometimes pass along very useful tips and tactical advice. Jungle, river, and battlefield sound effects are highly effective, as is the creepy *Apocalypse Now*-style musical score. Varying levels of difficulty allow you to tailor the missions' parameters to your own mood or skill level — realistic or unlimited supplies of ammo, smart versus stupid enemy behavior, instant or realistic reload times, etc.



Documentation is up to EA's own highest standards: clear, complete, literate, and well-illustrated. Included in the docs is a fascinating historical essay tracing the SEALs' origins back to the legendary frogmen of World War Two, along with a concise and balanced account of the Vietnam War itself, one mercifully free of any rhetorical cant or political axe-grinding.

SEAL Team is a gripping, thought-provoking simulation, a product that seems to have been guided from inception by a remarkably mature and intelligent design philosophy. It's far and away the best squad-level combat sim on the market, and unless something remarkable indeed is in the pipeline, it's likely to hold that distinction for a long time.

Electronic Arts, 1450 Fashion Island Blvd., San Mateo CA 94404

TORNADO

Category: Air-Combat Simulation

Publisher: Spectrum Holobyte

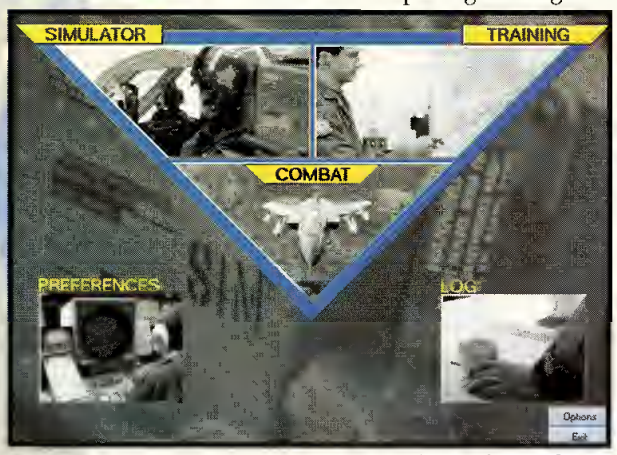
Developer: Digital Integration

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386SX/16 MHz	486/33 MHz
1 MB RAM	Joystick (Supports Flightstick Pro, Thrustmaster FCS)
Hard drive	Supported sound cards
VGA	Modem
Mouse	

BERNIE YEE

Spectrum Holobyte has built a reputation on Top Gun jet-fighter simulations. Its flagship product, *Falcon 3.0*, remains the most realistic and comprehensive F-16 combat simulator to date, despite the fact that it's over 18-months old — *ancient* in the entertainment software biz. Now Spectrum has just released *Tornado*, a simulation of the tactical fighter and ground-strike aircraft used in the British Royal Air Force. *Tornado* is the creation of British developer Digital Integration; when Spectrum saw the product, they decided that it was up to their high standards and agreed to publish it.



The Tornado is a two-man fighter designed to fly at low altitudes and high speeds, evading detection and delivering ordnance deep within enemy territory. Like many modern jet fighters, the Tornado has been around for a while, but it was Operation Desert Storm that put the spotlight on this excellent multi-purpose jet.

And this simulation lives up to its namesake. Despite the fact that the game comes on just three disks, there are many options available to a would-be pilot, like extensive mission planning capabilities, an instant-gratification dogfight option with unlimited fuel and armaments, and an "E-Z Fly" flight model that ignores the effects your payload would have on flight dynamics.

Novice pilots will appreciate these friendly features, but hardcore buffs will be happy to learn that *Tornado* is also capable of performing as a highly complex jet-fighter sim, as one glance at the weighty 331-page manual that accompanies the game will attest. The Tornado is a sweep-wing jet, and the sim allows you to adjust wing positions to optimize maneuverability and speed for specific flight conditions and mission objectives — sweep the wings forward for maneuverability and back for speed. Use the wrong configuration at high speeds, though, and your jet will rumble and begin to crack up.

Flying a jet — even one without sweep-wing capability — is no easy proposition; the various "how-to" books on sale in bookstores for games like *Falcon 3.0* are ample testimony to that fact. Because today's fighters can do so much, pilots have a formidable task ahead of them, and the more realistic the sim, the more the gamer must learn to fully utilize the technical capabilities of each fighter. *Tornado* is up to the challenge of re-creating the experience, and the cockpit instrumentation is as complex as you would expect. Since the Tornado is designed for both ground-strike missions and air-to-air engagements, the pilot must master different targeting and tracking systems, and learn to read the cockpit gauges and heads-up display quickly. Thankfully, *Tornado*'s designers have provided a Simulator option to let greenhorns practice before they take to live training.



An even more interesting option allows you to switch between the two cockpit positions, acting as either the pilot or the weapons-system officer. Since *Tornado* is essentially meant to be played as an ongoing campaign involving 20 pilots, simulator hours are ideal to practice your nose-plant. Crashing in the "live" Training mode can wipe out your pilot, but unlike earlier Spectrum sims, *Tornado* gives you the option of ignoring your debacle by giving you the option to *not* update the flight log.

As usual for Spectrum, the documentation accompanying the game is thorough. Read the manual (especially the combat tactics) carefully while learning to fly the Tornado, and your enjoyment will be enhanced greatly; it's obvious that *Tornado* is a well-researched and deep simulation



TURBO TOUCH 360™, THE STATE OF THE ART PC GAME CONTROLLER!



For use with IBM® PCs and compatibles



Gives you better diagonal control



Gives you easy circular control



Faster movement for higher scores



No more blisters or "numb thumb"

Extensively consumer-tested with game players, software developers and computer game reviewers, the Triax Turbo Touch 360 controller brings a new dimension of control and comfort to computer game playing. It's a breakthrough product, offering the benefit of higher scores and longer play without "thumb fatigue." Just pass your thumb or index finger over the control sensor–you don't have to push down. And, thanks to better diagonal and circular (360°) control, the newest and most challenging games are easier to control and more fun to play. The Turbo Touch 360 is the right product at the right time.

TRIAX™ TECHNOLOGIES

For the name of your nearest Turbo Touch 360 retailer or to place an order, call 1-800-858-7429

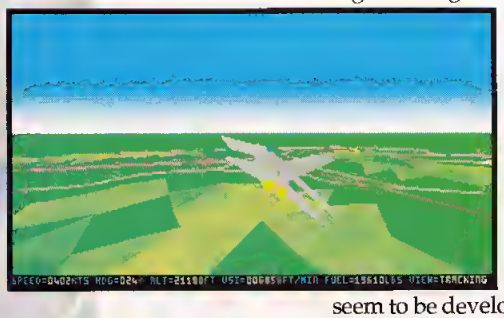
*Patent Pending. IBM PC is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation Turbo Touch 360 and Triax are trademarks of Triax Technologies.

©1993, Triax Technologies



of the fighter's capabilities. Combat becomes a mesmerizing experience, as you fly towards a target at night, 200 feet above the ground. Operating the weapons-delivery system is a real joy — this is where Tornado struts its stuff, just as an F-16 stretches its wings some 15,000 feet above.

Tornado uses a basic polygon-graphics system, so the hardware requirements aren't as demanding as those in a sim like *Strike Commander*; owners of 486/33 MHz systems will be able to set graphics and terrain to full detail without any loss of smoothness. And there are plenty of graphics to enjoy. While not as technically advanced as *Strike Commander*'s RealSpace graphics technology or *Comanche*'s fractally generated terrain, *Tornado* makes excellent use of polygons to create convincing buildings and other natural landmarks. Of course, gamers with slower CPUs can adjust the detail setting to smooth out the animation.



The sound effects are minimalistic but adequate, though I sorely miss the digitized chatter that gives *Falcon 3.0* such intense realism.

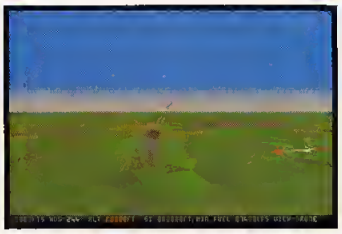
One weak spot in *Tornado* is the enemy artificial intelligence. In the air, some enemy pilots seem to be developmentally disabled. And SAMs (surface-to-air missiles) achieve an unbelievable kill ratio. For one thing, they seem to acquire and lock onto your fighter quicker than in comparable sims. And they're almost always lethal, due largely to the fact that there are very few things you can do to avoid a SAM in *Tornado*; in real life, outmaneuvering a SAM is an essential (and practical) tactic to avoid being flamed. SAM accuracy and lethality will be toned down in a *Tornado* patch, which should be available by the time you read this.



But despite the quibbles regarding game play in the air, *Tornado* is a superb game for what it accomplishes on the ground. *Tornado*'s Mission Planning system gives you control over numerous details in plotting strikes for you and up to five computer piloted wingmen. Use the planner to set out waypoints, check fuel consumption along the flight route, and set autopilot characteristics — this feature really allows you to fully plan and organize a strike. *Tornado* even gives you the option to move a virtual camera through a battlefield to examine the terrain in full 3-D.

Falcon 3.0 is famous for its depth of play — and notorious for its bug list. In fact, patches are still rolling out for that complex F-16 simulator. While I don't purport to have conducted a thorough bug search of *Tornado*, it seems relatively pest-free. A few lingering annoyances seem to exist, however; gamers have reported problems getting *Tornado* to interface properly with the throttle on Thrustmaster's Weapons Control System, and others have reported bugs in saving and/or updating the status of ongoing campaign pilot records and flight planning. The lack of analog rudder support is somewhat puzzling, since *Tornado* will undoubtedly appeal most to the serious sim fans who appreciate and use add-on flight hardware. Sound Blaster sound drops out occasionally during mid-mission, defaulting to inferior AdLib sound. To its credit, though, Spectrum is actively monitoring bug reports and is as responsive as ever to cleaning up these minor pesks.

Like *Falcon 3.0*, *Tornado* has an option for head-to-head play via modem or direct link. All complaints about the stupidity of computer opponents go out the window when you face a motivated and skilled pilot over the modem, either directly or through meeting places for modem gamers like CompuServe's Modem Games forum. But *Tornado*'s modem features fall short of their potential. Head-to-head combat is limited to other *Tornado* owners; there's nothing inherently wrong with that, but it would have been more interesting if you could use Falcon 3.0's head-to-head option to fly the Tornado against a human-piloted F-16 or MiG-29. At the very least, gamers would have enjoyed an option to play both cockpit positions in cooperation over the modem.



Dogfighting in a Tornado is a little less satisfying than in an F-16, because at high altitudes a Tornado would be no match for the Falcon — and there aren't many jet-combat situations at very low altitudes. (Flying any modern jet fighter may be less than gratifying than a WWII prop fighter, since targets today are routinely acquired and dispatched BVR, or Beyond Visual Range). The manual stresses that the Tornado's strengths are not in air-to-air combat, though it also says that if a pilot relies on the Tornado's strengths (low-altitude speed and variable maneuverability when in swept-wing configuration) it can often take out overconfident pilots in their "superior" aircraft. And you'll certainly get the chance to test that theory, because *Tornado* is stocked with high-speed interceptors like the F-16 and the MiG-29. Still, none of these "superior" dogfighters could fly the low-altitude, high-speed sorties the Tornado was designed to fly.

All in all, Digitial Integration and Spectrum Holobyte packed a lot firepower into three 3 1/2" disks. Though it lacks of the vast flexibility and scope of *Falcon 3.0*, *Tornado* is a slightly more accessible jet-fighter simulation that offers lots of replayability through its Mission Planning system. In short, *Tornado* has enough unique and well-designed features to satisfy almost any jet-simulation buff.

Spectrum Holobyte, 2490 Mariner Square Loop, Alameda CA 94501

WING COMMANDER®

PRIVATEER™

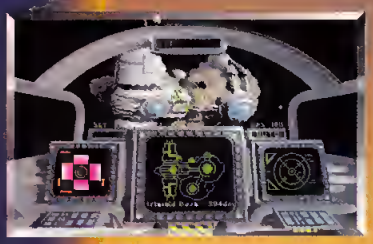
THE WAR AGAINST THE KILRATHI RAGES ON.
TO SOME, IT MEANS DEATH, SLAVERY OR DISHONOR...
TO OTHERS, IT'S THE CHANCE TO MAKE A QUICK BUCK.

- Make your own alliances and choose the life of a pirate, merchant or mercenary. You accept your assignments from the Mission Computers, Mercenary's Guild, Merchant's Guild or the nefarious fixers that inhabit every bar.
- Customize your ship according to your needs and budget—you can modify weapons, armor and other systems. And you'll need them, because your enemies want more than just a new kill stenciled on their prow—they want your cargo too.
- Upgrade your ship, from your grandfather's old *Tarsus* scout to the sleek *Centurion* fighter or *Orion* gunship—combat plays a vital role no matter how you decide to earn a living.
- Explore a complete universe with more than 50 bases and planets in almost 70 systems—agricultural planets, merchant colonies and mining bases.

***PRIVATEER* - WHERE DEALS ARE MADE WITH A HANDSHAKE AND BROKEN BY A VOLLEY FROM A MESON CANNON.**













Actual screens may vary
A Stand-Alone Game
Made in the USA

Douglas 92

ORIGIN®
We create worlds®
An Electronic Arts® Company
P.O. BOX 161750 AUSTIN, TX

Privateer is a trademark of ORIGIN Systems, Inc. Wing Commander, Origin, and We create worlds are registered trademarks of ORIGIN Systems, Inc.
Copyright © 1993 ORIGIN Systems, Inc. Electronic Arts is a registered trademark of Electronic Arts. For IBM PC and 100% compatible systems.

Available at a software retailer near you or call 1-800-245-4525 for MC/Visa/Discover orders.

Product Information Number 102

GATEWAY II: HOMEWORLD

Category: Sci-Fi Adventure

Publisher: Legend

Developer: Legend

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
IBM PC or compatible 640K RAM Hard drive VGA or SVGA	386SX/16 or better Sound Blaster, AdLib, or Roland MT-32 with MPU-401 compatible interface Mouse

You had it made, didn't you? First you were lucky enough to win a Gateway prospectorship in a lottery. Sure, the odds against a Gateway prospector striking it rich are astronomical, but you made the gamble pay off — and picked up a cool 50 million bucks. Even in 2112, that's enough to guarantee a life free from worry and work.

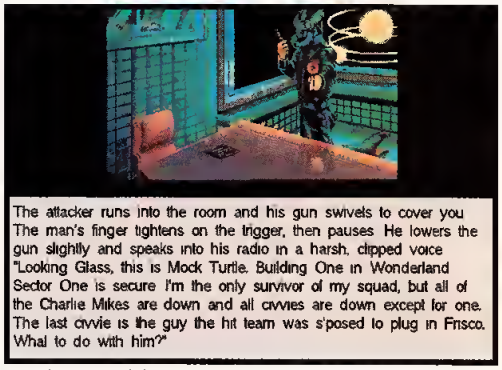
GARY MEREDITH

Oh, yeah. You also managed to save all of humanity from certain destruction.

But there must be some universal karma dispenser that starts dishing out adversity the very moment you think life couldn't get any better. Why else would the Gateway Corporation pick you, of all people, to brief the new Ambassador on the Heechee Artifact that suddenly blinked into existence just beyond the orbit of Pluto? What else could explain why the briefing turned into a flight for your life when the fanatical, Assassin-worshipping Phoenix Sect launched a commando raid on Gateway headquarters? And surely that must be why you ended up taking the Ambassador's place aboard the spaceship Aquila, bound for the Artifact and a fate you never imagined.



Legend's *Gateway II: HOMEWORLD*, the second game based on the award-winning books of Frederik Pohl, begins ten years after the events in *Frederik Pohl's Gateway*. The earth is safe from the near-omnipotent Assassins, thanks to your work in activating the Heechee screens which protect the solar system from the prying electronic eye of the Assassins' Watchtower. Your trip to the Artifact, however, is only the beginning of a whole new adventure which eventually leads to a meeting with the Heechee themselves. They mysteriously vanished some half-million years before, fearing detection and extermination by the Assassins. But you discover their home world, hidden these many millennia within the event horizon of a black hole. And you learn that, despite their wisdom and knowledge, the Heechee are much more human than you had ever imagined, and are bound up in their own complex political intrigues.

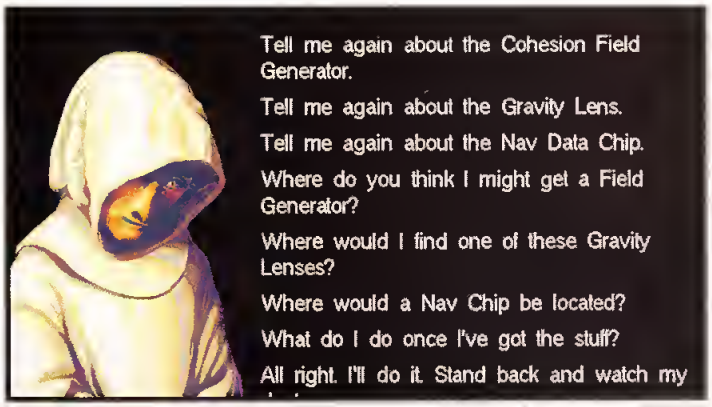


The attacker runs into the room and his gun swivels to cover you. The man's finger tightens on the trigger, then pauses. He lowers the gun slightly and speaks into his radio in a harsh, clipped voice. "Looking Glass, this is Mock Turtle. Building One in Wonderland Sector One is secure. I'm the only survivor of my squad, but all of the Charlie Mikes are down and all civvies are down except for one. The last civvie is the guy the hit team was s'posed to plug in Frisco. What to do with him?"

HOMEWORLD is a fascinating adventure, superior in many ways to the first game. The game is divided roughly into four sections: escape from the Phoenix Sect terrorists, adventures aboard the Heechee artifact, escape from the Ice World, and the intricacies of the Heechee homeworld. It's a very linear game — problems must often be solved in a particular sequence before you can progress — but there's also some latitude for further exploration, and for getting to know more about the characters you meet along the way.

A really nice touch, for example, is the conversations you can have with the unfortunate Gateway prospectors trapped within the computer aboard the Heechee Artifact, which is basically an intergalactic roach motel for curious spacefarers. After boarding the ship, these prospectors were eventually killed by the spiderlike service robot that patrols the corridors. But their personalities were preserved electronically — a technique still used on the Heechee homeworld — and can be accessed once you figure out how to activate the computer system. Only a couple of them provide useful information, but it's still interesting to converse with the others, just to hear how they came to be there and how they feel about their digital purgatory.

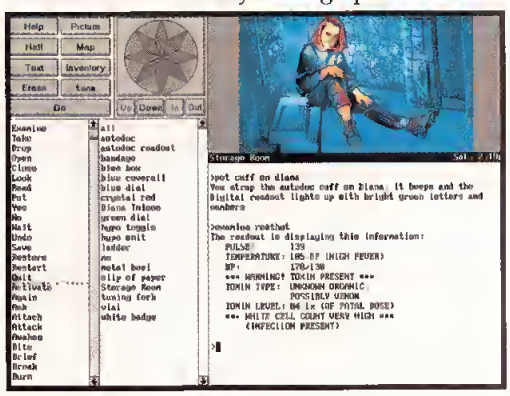
The potential conversations on the Heechee homeworld are also a lot of fun, giving a great deal of insight into aliens whose achievements belie their all-too-human shortcomings. All conversa-



tions in the game are handled via multiple-choice dialogue screens, branching at times depending on your selection. The system takes some of the guesswork out of communication — you can't really make a *wrong* choice — but it also takes out some of the fun. Still, the dialogue system works fairly well, though you can trip it up by asking questions in a particular sequence, such as when Exegesis' dramatic unmasking is prematurely leaked.

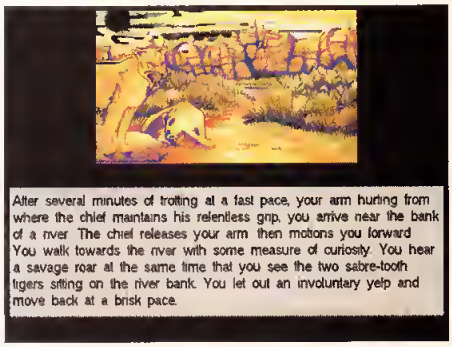
Most of the time, however, you'll be using Legend's trademark interface for your exploring. Depending on whether you're playing in SVGA or VGA, about a fifth (SVGA) or a third (VGA) of the screen is used for a graphic display of your surroundings. It's situated at the top-right of the screen, and just beneath it is a text window where detailed descriptions are displayed, as well as the game commands you issue. At the top-left is a compass which you can click on to move about the game, and underneath the compass is a list of verbs, nouns, and prepositions which you can click on to construct commands. You can also type in your commands, using a good old-fashioned text parser interface.

This system has unique strengths and weaknesses. On the plus side, the listing of all items within a scene can be very helpful, augmenting the well-rendered but fairly small graphics window.

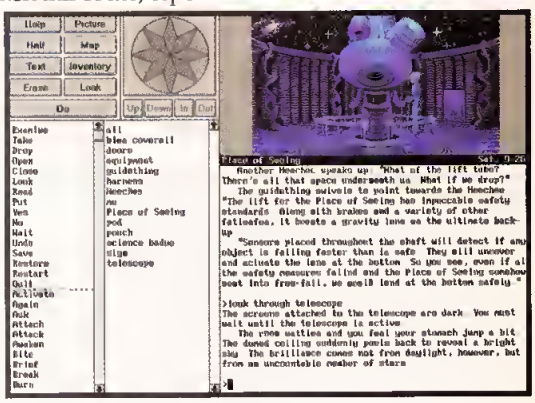


An option for quickly switching between an automap and the picture is also a nice inclusion, and the save/restore function — of paramount importance in this type of game — can be accessed quickly and easily.

The problem, though, is the pretension to a mouse-based interface which only half succeeds. You can move from scene to scene quickly, clicking the mouse pointer on either the compass rose or the map display. And performing simple tasks — such as looking at or taking an object — can be easily accomplished by clicking in the graphic window. When it comes to issuing complex commands with the mouse, however, you're in something of a no-man's land. You can either use the mouse to scroll through the interminable list of verbs and prepositions, or you can revert to the keyboard. For those who don't mind typing, it's best to just forget the mouse, but anyone whose fingers don't naturally seek those home keys will be frustrated. Legend is redesigning the interface for its next game (*Companions of Xanth*), which should put an end to the mouse-vs.-keyboard debate.


After several minutes of trotting at a fast pace, your arm hurting from where the chief maintains his relentless grip, you arrive near the bank of a river. The chief releases your arm, then motions you forward. You walk towards the river with some measure of curiosity. You hear a savage roar at the same time that you see the two sabre-tooth tigers sitting on the river bank. You let out an involuntary yelp and move back at a brisk pace.

Overall game design is up to the high standards we've come to expect from Legend, although there is one aspect that some may see as regressive. The game supports a number of popular sound boards, but the designers have included only music — there's nary a sound effect in the game. It's good music, to be sure, but it does seem odd that Legend has taken this route, especially when you consider the excellent RealSound effects (which sounded perfectly fine through the PC speaker) in the company's earlier titles.



Although Frederik Pohl ostensibly had no input into *Gateway II: HOMEWORLD*, the game truly feels as much a part of his Gateway saga as any of his novels. Players used to full-screen graphic adventures may be dismayed at the amount of reading they encounter in *HOMEWORLD*, but for the most part the writing is excellent, and the detailed descriptions allow for more complex puzzles than you'll find in most adventures.

Designers Glen Dahlgren and Mike Verdu have done a marvelous job of capturing the essence of Pohl's creation, and of immersing the player in the world of the 22nd century. The best science-fiction books pull you in, make you accept the unbelievable, and keep your interest peaked — and that's exactly what *HOMEWORLD* does. In the jargon of popular literary criticism, this one's "a real page turner."

Legend Entertainment, P.O. Box 10810, 14200 Park Meadow Drive, Chantilly VA 22021

WARLORDS II

Category: Strategy

Publisher: SSG

Developer: SSG

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386SX/16MHz, Hard disk 640K RAM VGA Mouse	2 MB RAM Disk-caching utility Supported Sound Cards

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

Up until the spring of 1991, the Australian-based Strategic Studies Group (SSG) was known primarily for its long and honorable line of hardcore wargames. The company's sole attempt at a fantasy role-playing game, an eminently forgettable product called *Fire King*, quickly sank without a trace.

I was therefore surprised, in that spring of '91, to receive a copy of *Warlords*, with its colorful cover depicting a fully caparisoned knight posed heroically in front of a castle. *Warlords* was a "stealth" product, released with virtually no fanfare, and the box copy clearly, almost defiantly, described it as "a fantasy war game." At that time, the only other product bearing that label was SSI's *Sword of Aragon*, and since I had become thoroughly addicted to that little classic, I installed *Warlords* with curiosity, but no great expectations.

Three weeks later, I was still playing, and continued to play, obsessively, until I'd gone through every possible variant. It really *was* a war game, one which incorporated every maxim of tactics and strategy in the book. It played like a streamlined dream: no stupid riddles to solve, no interminable dungeon corridors to map, no magic spells in bogus Elfish to memorize — just conquer or die. The only objective in the game was to crush the other seven warlords who were trying to exterminate you.



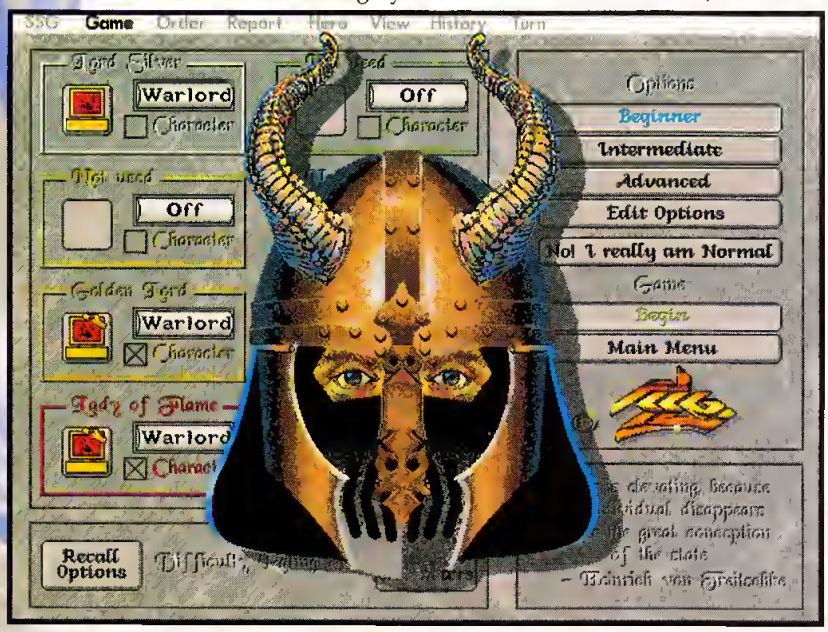
One key to success was learning how to orchestrate combined-arms offensives, using dragons and pegasi as strategic bombers, magical items as secret weapons, and hordes of light and heavy infantry as cannon fodder and to soften up enemy castles during sieges.

SSG had a surprise hit on their hands as wargamer after war-gamer surrendered to the game's charms, and to the sheer *fun* it delivered. Suggestions poured in from all over the world as to improvements and refinements; a sequel was inevitable and, indeed, there was an interim update of the original game — available only for the Macintosh, however.

Now comes the full-fledged PC sequel, one that incorporates a host of new features, imaginative options, gorgeous high-res VGA graphics, attractive theme music, and — if you have the hardware for it — the solemn voice of the Master Warlord, whose grim visage pops onscreen now and then to comment on your progress.



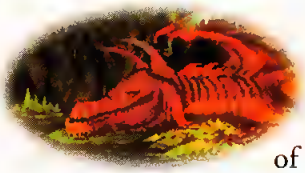
For newcomers, here's the basic concept: A huge fantasy-world lies open to conquest. Eight warlords contend for sole domination. Each city they capture can produce several types of military units, ranging from cheap infantry to expensive (both in cost and time) dragons and war elephants. You must manage production carefully, for just as each city produces a certain amount of income each turn, each active unit costs a certain amount to maintain. If you run out of money, you can only continue by deactivating units until the account



Find a well
Cast a spell
Make a mistake
Go to #*%!!

SIMON THE SORCERER™

Wherever you go, expect the unexpected. Because Simon is no ordinary sorcerer. He's an adolescent with an attitude, who accidentally stumbles upon a magical dimension on the very verge of collapse.

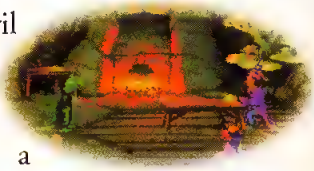


As fate would have it, only Simon can save it from a tyranny of evil. Armed with a sharp wit and a tongue to match, our reluctant hero sets forth on his quest.

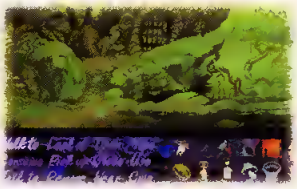




In a wacked-out world filled with beer-swilling trolls, a schizophrenic two-headed clerk, swamplings, werefrogs and more, he must acquire the knowledge of a sorcerer and defeat the evil wizard Sordid.



Discover a wondrously animated world. Unravel the mysteries of a puzzling plot. And beware that your biggest mistake would be missing all the fun of ...Simon The Sorcerer!



INFOCOM™
An Activision™ Company

Simon The Sorcerer is available for IBM and compatible computers.

To order: see your local retailer or call 1-800-477-3650

Product Information Number 106



books balance. The campaigns continue until one warlord emerges as the conqueror-of-conquerors. Feel free to bring your ego with you, since you have full freedom to name any character or city.

Warlords II has so many improvements over the first game that it's hard to know where to begin. For starters, the maps and graphics are wonderfully enhanced. Everything is crisp, vividly colorful, and richly imaginative (each warlord's cities have a distinctive look, ranging from giant skulls to storm-capped Olympian mountains). Several well-balanced campaigns come preloaded, but you can generate limitless random maps and fine-tune their terrain, adding a bit more ocean to one, a few more mountain ranges to another. It's clear that veteran war-gamers designed the terrain program, because each map is loaded with strategic objectives: choke-points, isthmuses, vital bridges, hard-to-penetrate forests, craggy mountain passes.

The military units are also vastly improved. There are several interesting new types available, including elephants, archons, elementals, and giant spiders. Many of these units have special bonuses which often dictate one's tactics and production schedules. Spiders, for instance, add two combat points if used in cities, elephants cause demoralization in the enemy, and the presence of catapults in cities enhances their defence power. While it's easier to form stacks of many different types, the resulting formation — though crushingly powerful — can only move at the rate of its slowest component. A major part of any strategy, therefore, involves grouping units of the same type and figuring out how to maximize their effect. As in the original game, you can "vector" units from production points far behind the lines to any other city in your possession, thus giving the game a crude but believable element of logistics.



Naval combat has been greatly simplified. Any stack of units that embarks on water turns into a ship icon, regaining land-warfare capability only when it lands at a port or city. Naval combat negates all special bonuses, incidentally, so a warlord can take to the sea and — if he's lucky — inflict damage on units which on land would be much more powerful than his.

Several new features give *Warlords II* even more appeal. There's now an option to personalize each warlord in the game. You can set the program for "intense combat" if you're in the mood for real slaughter (that setting gives weaker forces a slightly better chance when engaging a stronger opponent — think of it as a kind of "berserker" factor). To liven things up, you can allow the computer to assign turns randomly, which tends to make for a real Attila-the-Hun slugfest, with the various warlords' fortunes rising and falling with dramatic suddenness. You can also opt for hidden maps, which gives the game an *Empire*-like flavor by presenting you with a totally unknown world whose features are revealed only by exploration.

Captured cities can either be brought on-line to produce new units, or they can be pillaged, yielding no new troops, of course, but giving you a massive one-time infusion of cash in the form of loot. If you're desperate to halt the advance of a powerful invader, you can even employ "scorched earth" tactics by razing cities so that no one can ever use them again.

Ruins and temples are scattered liberally across each map, and when a hero-character visits them, he (or *she*, since the set-up screen is definitely non-sexist) stands a random chance of being destroyed, or of acquiring either mighty allies or a powerful item that enhances his fighting value or his



powers of command. One new wrinkle is the addition of optional quests, the successful completion of which will greatly enhance the hero's value.

I tried the quest option a few times and didn't care for it — too often, the quest involves assassinating a warlord who's half-a-continent away, and while your hero is off tracking him, you lose him as a fighting unit. When presented with the quest option, I would recommend choosing "allies," "money," or "items" instead — you can put these things to immediate use, while the successful outcome of a quest can't help you for many long turns.

Warlords II is a perfect sequel. It's packed with new and useful features, it's still easy to learn and hard to master, it looks terrific, and most of all, it packs more sheer fun than any other game of its kind. Kudos to SSG for making a great game even better!

Strategic Studies Group, 8348 Monticello Drive, Pensacola FL 32514

Build An Empire To Stand The Test Of Time

...With Sid Meier's CIVILIZATION™

Now available for Windows™



Actual screens may vary.

1991

- Best Consumer Entertainment Program
- Best Strategy program
- Critic's Choice

Software Publishers Association

Game of the Year

Tilt

Game of the Year

Byte



1992

Game of the Year

Computer Gaming World

PC Special Achievement Award

Game Players PC Entertainment

Game of the Year

Byte

Best Simulation

PCM

Strategy Game of the Year

PC Games Plus

Rout Ramses... Outwit Alexander... Knockout Napoleon...
History is littered with the bones of great men who thought their achievements would live forever. Now you can succeed where they failed as MicroProse brings you Sid Meier's **Civilization.** Guide a culture from its earliest stages, through agricultural and industrial revolutions, all the way to your own Space Age. Survive and dominate by outmaneuvering mankind's most legendary leaders. Carve your name indelibly in the pages of history. With Sid Meier's **Civilization,** you really can build a brave new world.

MICROPROSE®
ENTERTAINMENT • SOFTWARE

© 1993 MicroProse Software, Inc., 180 Lakefront Drive, Hunt Valley, MD 21030-2245.
For Macintosh, IBM-PC compatibles, and Commodore Amiga personal computers.
To get our free catalog, call **1-800-879-PLAY**, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm EST.

Product Information Number 221

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT 2

Category: Strategy

Publisher: Impressions

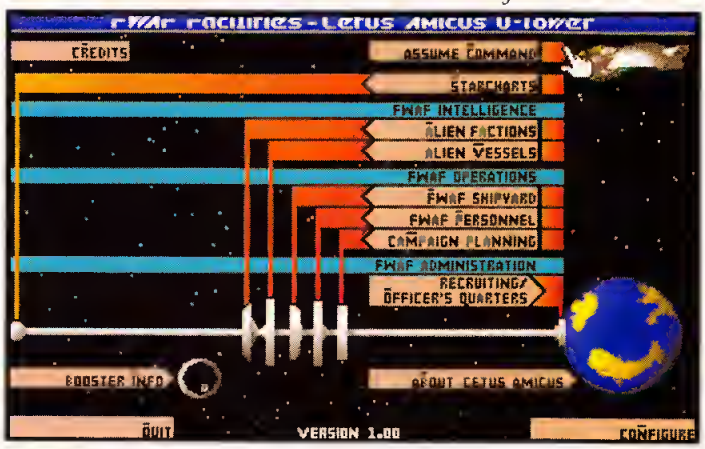
Developer: Omnitrend

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
286/16MHz	386SX/25
640K RAM	2 MB RAM
Hard drive	Supported sound cards
DOS 3.0 or higher	
VGA	

MARK PITCAVAGE

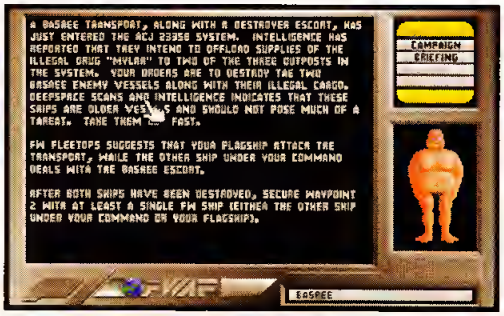
PC titles simulate space combat in one of two ways. The first is the action-packed, flight-sim model exemplified by *Wing Commander*. The other is a more cerebral blend of strategy and tactics, in the tradition of SSI's *Cosmic Balance*. For me, the second variety is more interesting, since the space combat that intrigues me most is not Red Leader going down in flames over the Death Star, but the claustrophobic, nerve-wracking duels shown in the Star Trek episode "Balance of Terror," or the David Gerrold novel *Yesterday's Children*.



Rules of Engagement 2 (ROE 2), the latest release from Omnitrend, follows in this second tradition. Like its predecessor, *Rules of Engagement*, *ROE 2* puts you in command of a squadron of starships. You issue orders to your subordinates, and directly control your flagship. You can play the many scenarios that make up a campaign, or use the game's extensive building system to create endless battles and campaigns of your own. Moreover, *ROE 2* links with *Breach 2*, a squad-level simulation of tactical combat; when your forces board an enemy ship, you can fight out that battle in detail, then switch back.

Those who enjoyed its first incarnation will no doubt like *ROE 2* even more, especially since Omnitrend has been careful to incorporate the suggestions of *ROE* players. For example, *ROE 2* contains more mine warfare and more differentiation between ship classes than its predecessor. In addition, the AI seems to be substantially better. There is a lot to like here for *ROE* enthusiasts.

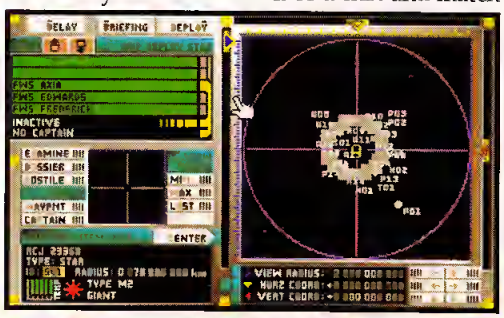
But what about those who haven't yet experienced the thrill of this sort of space combat? Will they enjoy it as much as veteran *ROE* fanatics? The answer is a definite maybe: *ROE 2* is as just as much a niche game as the title it replaces.



ROE 2 comes with three rulebooks. One is for building campaigns, and needn't be read immediately. The second book is the Fleet Operations Manual, a full 164 pages long. You'll need to familiarize yourself with much of that information in order to play the game well, and that can be a daunting proposition. But Omnitrend tries to make it easier for players to get into the game with the third book, a training manual that guides you through the introductory scenario and offers some tactical advice.

The game is played using the Command and Control Systems Interface (CCSI)—a system of 26 control windows, only four of which can be called up at any time. This leads to the fundamental problem with *ROE 2*: There's so much information, and so many control windows, that you can't see everything you'll need to maneuver, fight, and direct your forces. It would take a screen two to three times the game's 320 x 200 resolution, and a sizeable monitor, to display all the necessary information.

The CCSI solution is to break all the instruments down into different categories according to function, so that you can call them up and arrange them as you wish — kind of a mix-and-match



EMPIRE™ Deluxe

The Modern Version Of The Award Winning Classic

- An Addictive Strategy War Game
- Network and Modem Compatible
- Super VGA Graphics
- Advanced Scenario Editor
- Superior Computer A.I.
- Digitized Sound Effects
- Various Difficulty Settings
- Completely Re-Playable

By Mark Baldwin and Bob Rakosky

Now Available Windows Version & Scenario Pack



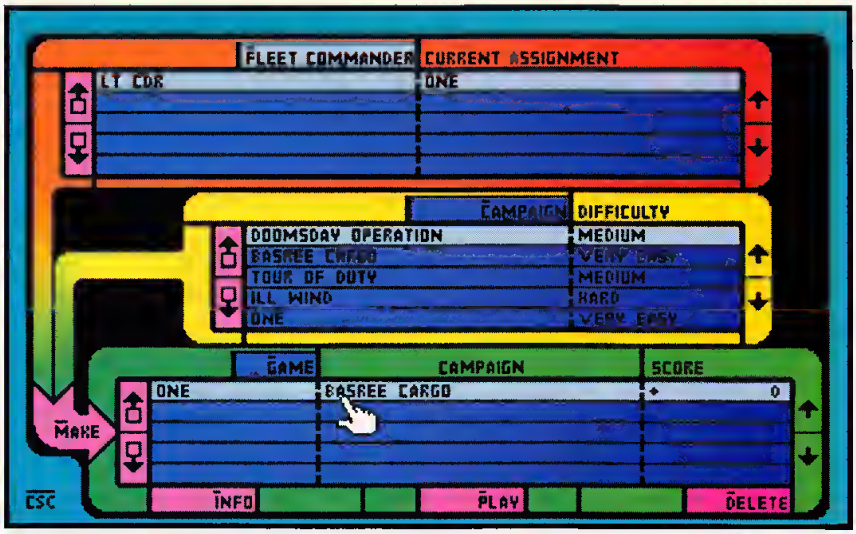


AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL SOFTWARE RETAILER OR DIRECT FROM NEW WORLD AT 1-800-325-8898
(OR 1-818-999-0607 outside U.S.) P.O. BOX 4302 HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA 90078-4302)

©1992 New World Computing, Inc. and White Wolf Productions. Empire Deluxe is a trademark of New World Computing, Inc.
New World Computing is a registered trademark of New World Computing, Inc.
IBM screens shown. Actual screens may vary.

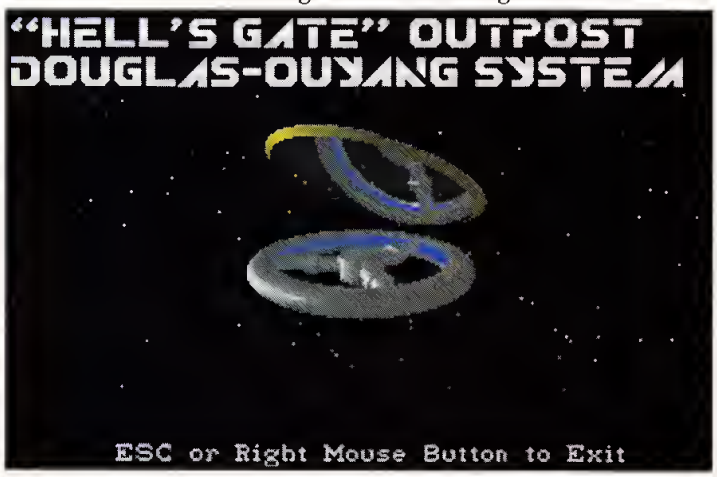
NEW WORLD COMPUTING

Product Information Number 241



game control system. For instance, you can have two tactical windows to help you fight, a navigation window showing movement, and a communications window to transmit orders to subordinates in other ships. You can even call up one of two large displays that combines some of the smaller windows.

The CCSI is a valid attempt at solving the game's problem of too many controls, but it's not completely successful. You'll often find yourself fumbling around for the right control window.



Until you're very familiar with the interface, it's maddeningly easy to open the wrong window, or replace a window you needed.

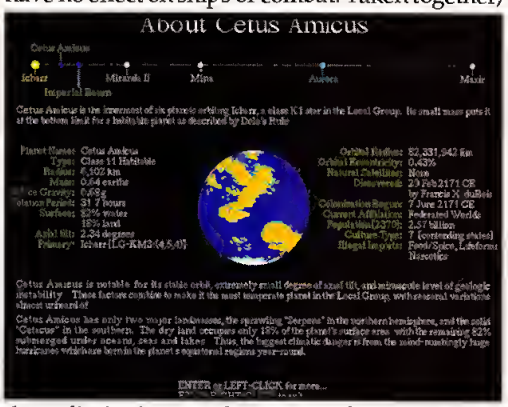
Furthermore, the information in each window is really crammed together. Buttons are labeled with tiny abbreviations, and ships, locations, and other points are never named, only numbered. As a result, you must remember a confusing array of alphanumeric designations: E01, E02, and E08 are all enemy ships, but E02 and E08 might be cruisers and E01 a transport. And don't confuse E01 with X01 or T01, or any other 01. At the very least, the designers should have tried to indicate ship in these designations.

An added complication is that combat is based in real time, so you must navigate frantically through the many windows and controls as you direct your ship in the heat of battle. There's a pause button, but it blacks out the entire screen except in the easiest mode. Pulling up even a single wrong window can mean the difference between life and death, as your ship's shields seem to disintegrate rapidly under enemy fire. Not everything occurs in real time, however; communications, as well as repairs at outposts, are both much quicker than they should be.

As I played the game, I sometimes found it very difficult to perform crucial tasks. In the tutorial scenario, for instance, I followed the instructions exactly, maneuvering my cruiser over to take out a weak transport. I locked on to the ship, readied my shields, selected my missiles, and so forth. Just when the enemy ship came within the range at which the training manual said I should begin firing, my ship lost target acquisition. I couldn't fire! I had to sit there while the lowly transport destroyed my cruiser. I never did achieve target acquisition, though I'd been heading straight at the enemy ship. The same thing happened while playing the tutorial a second time, though this time after maneuvering wildly and taking damage, I finally re-acquired my target. It's unsettling when these problems crop in a tutorial.

Repeated play will give you more of a feeling as to what you can and cannot do with your ship—though even after hours of play, I still found occasions in combat when nothing seemed to make sense. You may also find your subordinates frustrating, as they decide to take matters into their own hands. A modern officer who took such actions would be promptly relieved, but evidently in the future insubordination is not punished.

For all its complexity and detail, *ROE 2* is still shallow in some areas. There are only two types of weapons, beams and missiles; only six types of ships (both sides have the same types); and only two types of outposts. "Terrain" is limited to asteroid and radiation fields, and stars. Planets have no effect on ships or combat. Taken together,

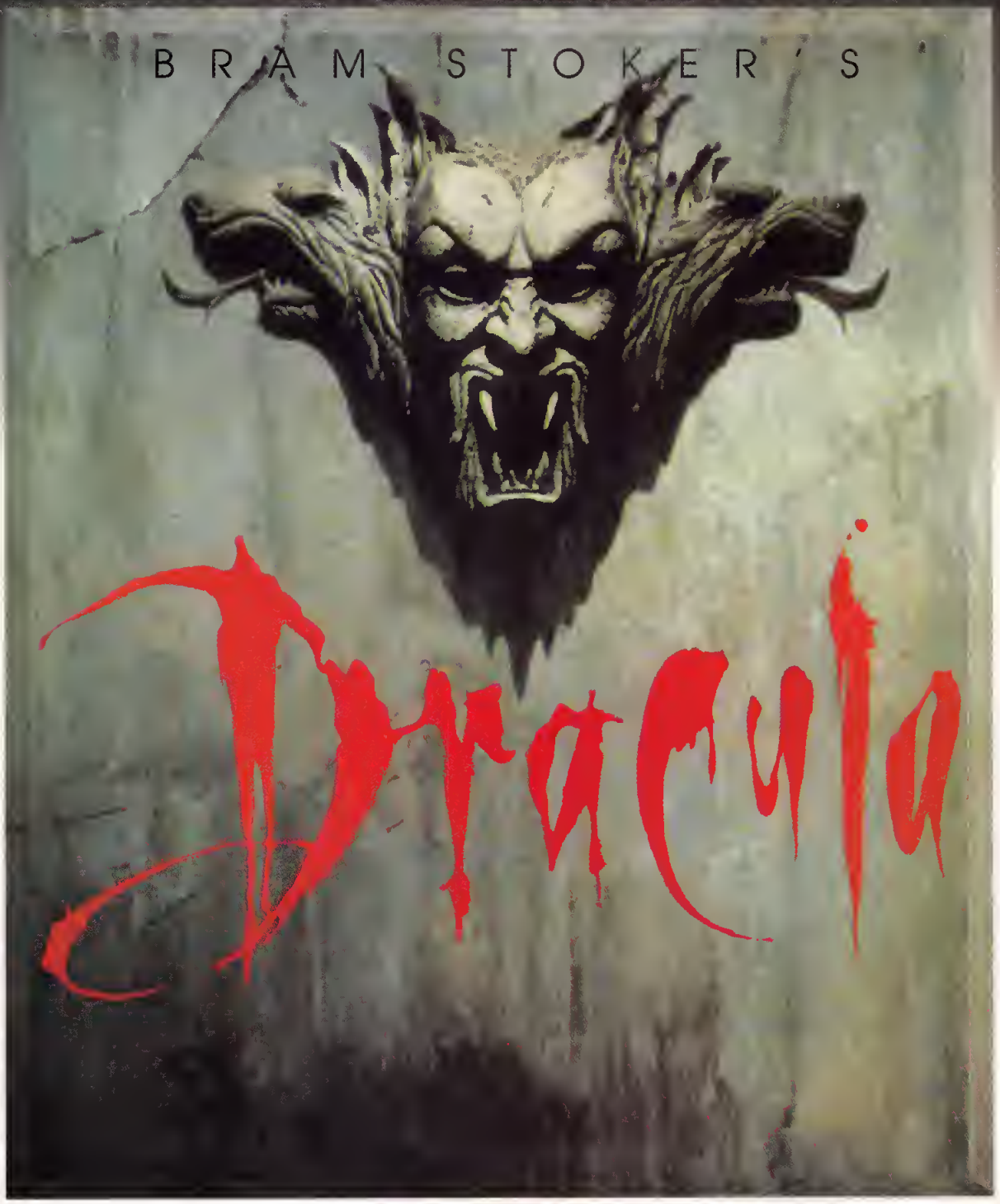


these limitations make many of the scenarios feel the same. And even though this game would be well-suited to modem play, the option is not provided.

Because of these limitations — as well as its strengths of scenario-creation and great detail — *ROE 2* will primarily appeal to the gamer willing to devote many hours to mastering the system, working through its quirks, and utilizing its assets. *ROE 2* isn't for everyone, but it's sure to delight players most enamored of the original *ROE*.

Impressions Software, 222 Third Street, Suite 0234, Cambridge MA 02142

BEWARE,
THE SOUL OF YOUR MACHINE IS IN MORTAL DANGER!



Psygnosis
675 Massachusetts Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 497-7794

If you can't find this game at your favorite retailer call: (800) 438-7794 (GET PSYG) to order your copy today

Bram Stoker's Dracula™ is a trademark of Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc © 1992 Columbia Pictures Industries Inc All rights reserved

Product Information Number 103

ASHES OF EMPIRE

Category: Strategy/Simulation

Publisher: Gametek

Developer: Gametek

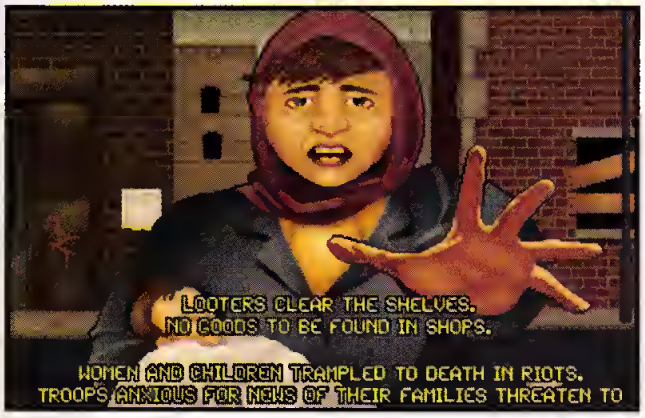
Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
286/12 MHz	386SX/16 MHz or better
3 MB RAM	Supported sound cards
Hard drive	Mouse or joystick
VGA	

LEE BUCHANAN

Communism has collapsed in the former Soviet Union, and the once-mighty nation has disintegrated into a group of republics teetering on the edge of civil war, torn by ethnic tensions, economic catastrophe, rampant crime, and impending starvation. Nuclear war is a constant threat.

Your mission, should you choose to purchase *Ashes of Empire*, is to bring peace and harmony to these shattered republics. Through diplomatic maneuvering, heartfelt pleadings, or brute force, you must win support in each of five republics, province by province.



Gametek's *Ashes of Empire* is a *big* game -- a deep and complex simulation that challenges the player on several fronts. To succeed, you must be something of a chameleon, assuming the roles of diplomat, bureaucrat, enforcer, negotiator, and even pilot.

If you think that sounds like a formidable gaming experience, you're right. And if you think that it also sounds like there's considerably more work than play involved here, you're right again. *Ashes* is unquestionably an ambitious effort, seeking to fuse elements of strategy-gaming, diplomacy, and action games. In the end, however, *Ashes* simply tries to do too much, and ends up being more of a chore than a game. While it may appeal to aspiring bureaucrats, for my taste there's just not enough action, nor any sense of urgency, to keep entertainment-minded players interested.



The setting, fictional but familiar, is the former Confederation of Syndicalist Republics, which includes the republics of Ossia, Ruzakhstan,



Belokraine, Moldenia and Servonia. The totalitarian Syndicalist party has relaxed the reins on the republics, and the result has been chaos in the fledgling nations.

Each republic, divided into as many as nine provinces, is an ethnic melting pot — a result of deliberate relocation to achieve diversity. That diversity can be an obstacle at first, but as you win the support of an ethnic group in one republic, members of the same group living in other republics also rise to support you.

The key to building support within a single republic, and across that republic's ethnic groups, lies in appealing to the professional classes — medicine, military, engineering, and administration. Each of these classes is controlled by five ranks of professionals. Win the support of a high-ranking professional and you command the loyalty of all the professionals under him or her. Even more effective is a visit straight to the top: If you win the favor of a republic's president, you gain the loyalty of all 133 professionals in the nation.

In exchange for their support, professionals will demand various resources, or ask for the



assistance of professionals allied with your cause. But professionals are a highly mobile bunch, moving from town to town within a province. Once a professional comes over to your side, though, he'll offer to join your staff or provide a special service, such as delivering votes, providing resources, constructing a new building or demolishing an old one, or persuading the military to join your team.

As you make contacts among a town's professionals, you'll learn the whereabouts of higher-

GATEWAY II
HOMEWORLD™



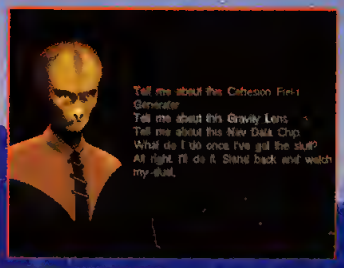
SPECTACULAR ANIMATIONS!

Five hundred thousand years ago, a technologically advanced race called the Heechee ruled the galaxy. Then they vanished.

San Francisco 2112 A.D. A fanatic cult of terrorists plans to bring the Heechee's ancient enemy to Earth and purify humanity in a bath of cleansing fire. You must stop them, but you can't do it alone.

The race to stop these madmen catapults you on a journey to new worlds and new adventures and ultimately across the event horizon of a black hole where you discover mankind's last remaining hope for survival — the Heechee homeworld.

Based on Frederik Pohl's Hugo and Nebula award-winning Heechee saga.



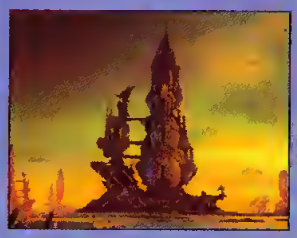
Meet the Heechee face to face. Hold conversations via new intelligent dialogue system, operate alien technology, pilot a starship!



BE A PART OF THE ACTION!

Available Now In Stores!

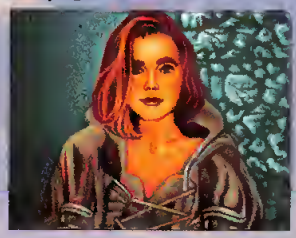




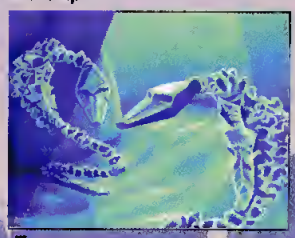
Experience the chilling reality of 22nd century Earth



Battle murderous robots, carnivorous dinosaurs and spear-carrying humanoids



Rescue a prospector marooned in a robot-controlled Heechee starship



Escape a frozen planet where crystalline beings metabolize electricity



Cross the event horizon and explore the Heechee planets hidden in the Core of a massive black hole

LEGEND™
ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY
P.O. Box 10810 14200 Park Meadow Drive
Chantilly, VA 22021

Distributed by Accolade, Inc.
To order, visit your local retailer or call 1-800-245-7744

1993, Legend Entertainment Company. Gateway II: HOMEWORLD is a trademark of Legend Entertainment Company. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Actual VGA graphics shown.

Product Information Number 215



level professionals with whom you can negotiate. One character in each province knows where all professionals are, even governors and presidents.

Upon entering a town, you can move from building to building, trying to win the backing of the civilians who control them and learning the locations of the professionals whose support is so vital. There are 28 types of buildings, each run by a single administrator. Win that civilian's support through barter or persuasion, and the building falls under your control. To secure a province, you must gain control of its key installations — including military complexes, communication centers, radar units, barracks, and factories.

A stockpile of commodities (weapons, vehicles, and fuel) is at your disposal. These are used to barter with civilians and professionals, and to conduct your own military operations. You're allotted a fixed amount of time to win over a province. Run past the deadline, and saboteurs begin setting fires.

There are several means of persuasion at your disposal. You can try to charm, threaten, beg, or trick citizens to gain control of their buildings. Only two of the strategies will work with any given citizen, and if you guess wrong you lose valuable time.

Your goal, then, is to win support province by province. But you can't just pop into town to flex your diplomatic muscles. You have to use a vehicle to enter the republic and, using a partial map, find your way to the towns. The rather barren landscape holds plenty of danger, and as you journey you'll see missile-launchers, aircraft, and other vehicles. Luckily, your papers guarantee safe passage for two hours.

The world of *Ashes* is vast — the game encompasses about 2.8 *million* square miles. Your character can move about in any part of that world, using dozens of vehicles, including jet fighters, bombers, boats, submarines, tanks, and motorcycles. You can also walk, of course, and even swim. Transportation sometimes borders on silly: You can fly your hovercraft to the beach, get out and start swimming; dive under the surface and you become a frogman, watching submarines flit about the ocean.



The interface is surprisingly simple for such a complex game. You can interrupt the real-time action to look at the map, check on your recruits and resources, monitor your professional teams, and view a list of demands from the people you're negotiating with.



It's when *Ashes* puts on the hat of flight-sim and combat game that it really fails. As should be obvious by now, the game is already complex enough without trying to introduce an action-fest into the mix. If you want an exciting flight sim, there are plenty on the market that don't come wrapped in such complicated strategy. And how realistic is it to expect an administrator to be a crack fighter-pilot captain, dodging missiles on a mission of diplomacy?

You start the game in a jet fighter, and, like all aircraft at your disposal, it flies more like a hovercraft — pretty convenient, considering there are no airstrips around. Threats are everywhere, both on the ground and in the sky. You're safe while your movement papers are in effect, but once they expire you're fair game. You have weapons at your disposal — but, like the flight controls, the targeting systems are far too simplistic.

It's a shame that *Ashes'* authors chose to throw a combat simulation on top of the rest of the game. Though it might not excite everyone, *Ashes* succeeds as a diplomacy simulation. But the game tries to be so much more — flight sim, tank sim, submarine sim, hovercraft sim, motorcycle sim, you name it. And all these elements really do is get in the way of the things the game does well.

Ashes' world is huge, and the player has free movement within it, but there's not much to look at. The terrain is an endless desert-like vista of hills, with little to break the visual monotony. The graphics are ordinary, and sound effects are almost nonexistent.

The documentation, on the other hand, is excellent, spelling out in precise detail what you need to do to bring stability to the republics. Every republic is profiled, so you know the ethnic mix and resources of each one, as well as what resources and assistance they require.

It's admirable that *Ashes'* authors sought to craft a strategy game in which peace is the objective instead of destruction. But the means of bringing peace to this interesting game world can be tedious, and the whole affair sorely lacks excitement — something, anything, to spark your imagination as you sit at the keyboard and chip away at the huge task before you. *Ashes* has an interesting story, it's richly detailed, and undeniably challenging. And there's probably a subset of gamers out there who'll find the total experience rewarding and worthwhile. But as harsh as it may sound, the bottom line is that *Ashes of Empire* just isn't much fun.

Gametek, 2999 N.E. 191 Street, Suite 800, North Miami Beach FL 33180

"My Most Dangerous Adventure Of All Will Never Be Shown On T.V.!"

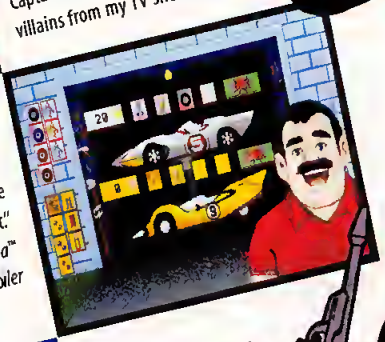












"I've had some close calls. But this is crazy! In *The Challenge of Racer X*,™ you'll face danger two ways. First, you'll take on the mysterious Racer X™ in a 200MPH free-for-all. You'll need everything in the Mach 5's arsenal just to stay close... Autojacks to leap clear of danger, chopper-blades to cut through obstacles, even a new on-board CRT that allows you to receive messages from Pops, Trixie, Spridle and Chim-Chim. And that's just the half of it. You'll also race against me from the cockpit of Racer X's incredible Shooting Star. But it won't be easy. Because Snake Oiler, Captain Terror, and all the evil villains from my TV show are out to send you over the guardrails. So fasten your seatbelt. Because you're gonna rip around blind curves on icy mountain roads. Leap over rocky chasms. Witness horrible fiery crashes! Gosh, I hope no one gets hurt." Coming soon for Super Nintendo® and Sega™ Genesis.™ To order, visit your favorite retailer or call 1-800-245-7744.



Available for the IBM PC and compatibles.

©1993 Accolade, Inc. All rights reserved. ©1993 Speed Racer Enterprises, Inc. Speed Racer and Racer X are trademarks of Speed Racer Enterprises, Inc. and are used under license. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are properties of their respective owners. SuperNES is a registered trademark of Nintendo of America Inc. Sega and Genesis are trademarks of Sega Enterprises Ltd.

ACCOLADE™
GAMES WITH PERSONALITY.

WHEN TWO WORLDS WAR

Category: Strategy/Simulation

Publisher: Impressions

Developer: Impressions

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
IBM PC or compatible	386SX/20 MHz or faster
640K RAM	2 MB RAM
Hard Drive	Supported Sound Cards
DOS 3.0 or higher	(Aria chipset for voice
VGA, Mouse	recognition)

Picture a future when planetary wars are so common that the various galactic races assume conflict to be inevitable. But because wars are such messy, expensive, destructive affairs, considerable thought has gone into devising ways to fight them more efficiently, economically, and neatly. Naturally, there's plenty of corporate competition to design and market systems that will enable planetary governments to do just that. On such a satiric, tongue-in-cheek premise rests the design of *When Two Worlds War*, an extremely impressive simulation of interplanetary warfare from Impressions.

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

When you first open the box, you'll notice a clever advertising brochure touting the virtues of a product called the Westock-Waadam Warfare Workstation. The ad reads, in part:

After years of fighting, victory leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of the survivors who must heal the scars to their planet and their people....But this depressing situation need never occur again, thanks to the Westock-Waadem Warfare Workstation. The automated systems of the W2WW give you complete control over your forces and a clearly defined rules system that assures a clean and decisive victory every time. With this system, you can eliminate your foe with a minimum of fuss and harm, and return to the peaceful life you desire and cherish.



There are also quotations from satisfied customers ("'I don't know what we would have done without it!' says planetary governor Adile Redvest"). This bit of truth-in-advertising gives you the essence of this beautifully designed and obsessively playable game. One thousand billion satisfied customers can't be wrong!

The entire simulation is focused on and controlled by the Westock-Waadem Warfare Workstation (hereafter referred to simply as W2WW). The interface looks, feels, and responds like an actual workstation, and it does everything its manufacturer claims it will do.

First off, you "calibrate" the simulation by setting up the two opposing planets: You determine their size, technological levels, and beginning resources. You can do this easily by cycling through a series of multiple-choice questions, or you can go to a deeper level of the program and design custom planets in great detail (and store them for future use, if you design an especially pleasing world). You can also fashion a campaign game by pitting your planet against a series of randomly generated foes.



Next, you decide the tech level your worlds. Ten technologies are available, governing the speed, protection, firepower, accuracy, and range of your various weapons (called MUs, for Military Units). If you choose the default setting of low technology, part of your strategy must be the development and allocation of resources, which are generated by your "facilities." Facilities come in four types: Sci-Labs (for producing units of knowledge), Mines (to obtain raw materials), Power Stations (distribution of energy), and Food Farms, each of which produces enough supplies to support a single MU.

One of the niftiest features of the game is the fact that you can produce *any* type of air, sea, land, or space unit you can dream up, subject only to economic and technical limitations—both of which can change radically during the course of a campaign—provided your defenses are strong enough to prevent the enemy from flattening your bases and facilities. You can design and manufacture tanks, transport vehicles, orbiting satellites packed with missiles and radar, submarines, artillery — you name it, you can produce it.



Units are all modular in design, so you can plug in improved systems without having to scrap your entire inventory of that particular MU. Here again, the choice is yours: You can concentrate on producing a handful of super-dreadnoughts capable of any task (probably bankrupting yourself in the process), or take



the more sensible route of designing a manageable number of specialized units tailored for the environment in which they'll be fighting.

One thing's for sure: You have an *incredible* range of design possibilities. With 10 technologies and 11 levels (including Zero — no technology at all), the game affords you a practically infinite number of possible permutations. Awesome.

There are three ways to give orders to your MUs. The primary mode is Library Missions. Accessing this part of the Mission Programming Panel allows you to assign a wide variety of common missions ("Patrol NE Blue Planet," for example, or "Attack Red Planet Sci-Labs") with just a couple of logical mouse clicks. For the occasional tactical situations not covered by a Library Mission, you can program Question-and-Answer Missions. To do this, select the general type of mission you want, then input specifics of location, movement pattern, targeting, and so forth. When you have these missions fine-tuned, you can, if you wish, name them and add them to the Library Missions.

For special missions, or just for the sheer fun of it, you're able to initiate Direct Control over any MU in your inventory, piloting it and firing its weapons for as long as you want, or until it runs



out of ammo. You also have the option of scheduling production in any order of priorities you desire; you can spread out your R&D work so that several projects make incremental progress simultaneously, or you can adjust the "effort" function so that all resources are mobilized to complete an important project or unit in the shortest possible time.

Obviously, any interface that gives you this kind of control over so many processes is bound to be complex. There's no denying that the W2WW is very complicated, and its learning curve is stratospheric — the 127-page manual is *crammed* with essential information (but not, thank heavens, padded with one of those bogus narrative texts you so often find in this sort of game!). Give Impressions a round of applause, though, because *When Two Worlds War* comes not only with detailed on-line help, but also with one of the cleanest, clearest, most patiently detailed tutorials I've ever read. It's a paradigm of good design and good prose. Special praise here goes to Chris Foster, who's credited with authoring these docs.

And once you start figuring out what's what, you'll discover that *When Two Worlds War* has one of the tightest, most elegant interfaces of any product on the market. Yes, it's *that* good — a true joy to work with.



Oh, yes, as to the battles themselves — they are thoroughly engrossing and blessed with crisp, colorful graphics. Battles are fought in any of three modes: real-time with no pauses (by far the hairiest method), stop-go real time (probably the best choice until you're really confident with the interface) or the traditional turn-based method.

When Two Worlds War supports modem play, and that's probably the best way to savor its pleasures; but when the AI is set to its highest level, you'll be facing an aggressive computer opponent. If you have a sound card with an Aria chipset, you can actually issue verbal commands to your PC and watch them being executed — an interesting option, but one that seems to me to be of limited utility. I'm not sure I want my family to see and *hear* me issuing orders to my computer!



Clearly, *When Two Worlds War* incorporates ideas from a dozen classic war-of-the-worlds games, but the concept is so strong, and the interface so touched with brilliance, that it *feels* like a whole new gaming experience, even if you're a veteran planet-buster. Without a doubt, this is one of Impressions' strongest products to date — and one that would-be galactic conquerors will be talking about for a long time.

Impressions Software, 222 Third Street, Suite 0234, Cambridge MA 02142

SHADOW OF THE COMET

Category: Horror Adventure

Publisher: I-Motion

Developer: I-Motion

Rating:

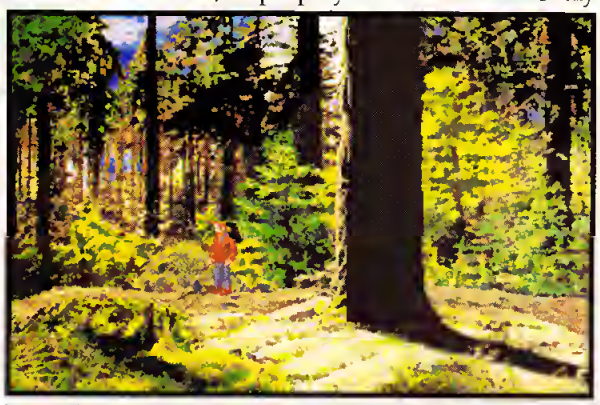
REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
286/16 Hard Drive DOS 3.0 or higher VGA	386SX/16 or Higher Supported Sound Cards

LEE BUCHANAN

It's been 76 years since British scientist Lord Boleskin was driven to insanity. He was in a quiet New England fishing village, trying to photograph Halley's Comet, when he apparently made some sort of grim discovery—and he was never the same again. Now another astronomer has arrived in the sleepy town to photograph the comet, and perhaps learn the secret of Boleskin's discovery.

That's the premise behind I-Motion's *Shadow of the Comet*, a graphic adventure inspired by the tales of H.P. Lovecraft. It's based around an intriguing story, full of strange characters and curious clues, but because of uninspired graphics and a confining interface, *Shadow* ultimately falls short as a graphic adventure.





Shadow of the Comet, A Call of Cthulhu Adventure, is from the same company that wowed the gaming world with *Alone in the Dark*. But don't expect that sort of excitement in this game: The more conventional *Shadow* can't match the tension-filled, cinematic perspectives and gripping graphics of *Alone in the Dark*. *Shadow of the Comet* does spin a good yarn, though, laced with riveting characters and dark mysteries.



You play as John Parker, a British astronomer who travels to the sleepy coastal village of Illsmouth in 1910 to unravel the mystery of Lord Boleskin's insanity. You'll duplicate his work, and discover what drove him to madness.

It turns out that poor Boleskin stumbled upon a spot from which the stars above looked unusually close, and were arranged in a strange way.



There, he encountered the phenomenon that drove him over the edge — supernatural happenings involving a shadowy cult linked to Indian gods called the Great Ancients.

You have three days — the time during which the comet is visible — to solve the mystery and keep the Great Ancients at bay. After settling into your room at Dr. West's house, you move out and begin exploring the town, which is made up of about 20 buildings as well as a few other, more sinister, sites outside of town.

At first, the people you meet all seem friendly enough. But it soon becomes clear that some of the townsfolk know a lot more than they're letting on. There's the mayor who's a bit too curious, the friendly girl with the overbearing aunt, the bellicose police officer, and the surly bartender. And those guys playing poker could be trouble....

Illsmouth is a tranquil village during the day, but at night it becomes a sinister hub of cult activity and the very center of the game's central mystery. And those townspeople, who were so cordial in daylight, take on suspicious new personas when the sun sets.

It's a big world to explore — there are more 100 game screens, most of them in the town itself. That's where you'll run into a bit of action that adds some excitement to the game. For instance, you'll find yourself defending some hapless chap

SAN FRANCISCO



Scenery for Microsoft® Flight Simulator™ v.5.0 For DOS Systems

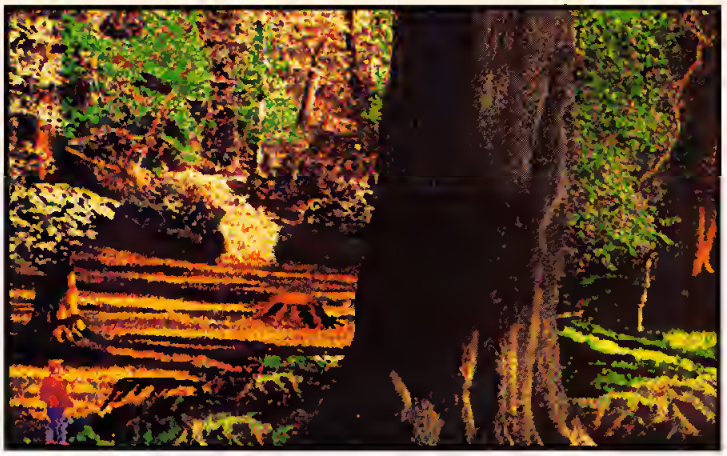
Photo-Realistic scenery of San Francisco Bay and surrounding area

For more information or to order call
1-800-WEB-FEET

© 1993 Mallard Software, Inc.

Mallard™

Product Information Number 132



from a pair of town bullies. And if you stick up for the gypsies when a cop tries to run them off, they'll befriend you later.

Bits of Boleskin's writings and drawings survive around town, and the clues they contain lead you into the woods, where, naturally, evil lurks. There you'll find a stone circle where a cult performs a strange ceremony.

The game's engine is the same as the one used in I-Motion's *Eternam*, and sports a bare-bones interface to guide you through the story. You maneuver Parker through town, using the few options available to you to investigate various scenes, meet inhabitants, and search for clues. Your actions are limited to walking, talking, getting and using items, and looking.

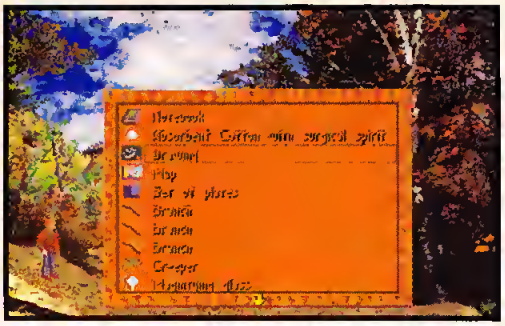


A pop-up inventory gives you easy access to your possessions, and a map allows you to move quickly about town. But perhaps the most useful tool is Parker's journal, which keeps track of clues, conversations, and your character's own thoughts.

The full-screen adventure moves smoothly, with quick transitions between scenes. Each encounter with one of Illsmouth's 40-odd characters



brings a close-up view of the character; close-ups also accompany many of Parker's actions, such as opening a drawer, working a lock, or knocking on a door. The simple interface, while easy to use, doesn't really give you a chance to fully explore the town and its story. If you've ever played an adventure game, you know that the first thing you do



when you enter a new scene is look around, exploring every possible nook and cranny. But in *Shadow of the Comet*, there's very little in the way of objects you can examine — virtually the only time you can "see" something is if it's an important item. This Spartan environment leaves little to achieve in the way of discovery: If there's *anything* to get or look at, it's almost certainly a clue.

You'll have to do a little investigation, in fact, before you even turn on the computer. A



packet of documents relating to the Boleskin affair are included with the game, allowing you to review the case and study the details of Boleskin's death.

Sound effects are minimal — a knock on the door, the music of the gypsies, birds chirping in the woods — while conversations are handled entirely with text balloons and dialogue choices. That's certainly not uncommon



in graphic adventures, but a bit of digitized speech would have been a nice touch, and perhaps given the characters more distinct personalities.

Incidently, *Shadow of the Comet* gets my vote for the most annoying copy-protection routine on the market today. It's actually a little cardboard box, with a lens in one end and 176 pictures of constellations (many of which look alike) at the other. You have to squint into the viewer and identify two of the damn things every time you start the game!

Shadow of the Comet offers nothing new in adventure gaming, and it certainly could have been dressed up a bit with more sound and some animation. Still, for computer sleuths who love a good mystery, *Shadow* should offer many hours of interesting investigation — if not compelling gaming.

*I*Motion, 1333 Oceon Avenue, Suite J, Sonto Monico CA 90401*

Used to be that only videogame systems gave you the fast, easy action of a thumb-control pad. But now the new QuickShot Starfighter 5 brings thumb excitement to your IBM PC.

Starfighter 5 is loaded with features like automatic centering, turbo firing, and eight-directional-movement. Plus it's got super-sensitive response buttons and smooth contours for an excellent thumbs-on experience.



Starfighter 5 IBM-compatible thumb-control pad

And Starfighter 5 is the same neutral color as your computer casing—so you can keep it next to your PC and it won't stick out like a sore thumb.

Starfighter 5 is the newest member of the QuickShot controller team—a complete lineup of high-quality joysticks, arcade-style controllers, and thumb-control pads for IBM-compatible PCs and the most popular video-game systems.

You'll find QuickShot wherever PC game products are sold...And in the hands of value-wise gamers like you.

QuickShot Technology, Inc. A Member of Tomei Group. 47473 Seabridge Drive, Fremont, CA 94538

QuickShot®

It's how you play the game.

QuickShot is a registered trademark. Starfighter 5 is a tradename of QuickShot patent (BVI) Ltd. All other product names are registered trademarks or tradenemes of their respective companies

Product Information Number 119

THUMB PEOPLE HAVE ALL THE FUN.



LANDS OF LORE

Category: Fantasy Role-Playing

Publisher: Virgin Games

Developer: Westwood Studios

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386SX/16MHz, HD 2 MB RAM (1MB XMS) VGA Mouse	386/33 Or Better Supported Sound Cards

NEIL RANDALL

I've just spent several days with *Lands of Lore*, the latest FRP from *Eye of the Beholder I* and *II* creators Westwood Studios, and I've got good news and bad news for role-playing fans. The good news is that *Lands of Lore* elevates the standard for graphics and interface in first-person FRPs. There's no question that this is a very attractive game. The bad news, though, may well be more important: *Lands of Lore* introduces absolutely no new concepts in fantasy role-playing, sticking instead to the genre's tried and true — and terribly overused — hack 'n' slash formula. The result is a solid game for hardcore FRP fans, but one that never fully lives up to the promise of its opening screens.

And those opening screens are masterful. The intro sequence is a graphic feast, and the sound is just as impressive. We see the king in Gladstone Keep, and our hero (that's you) as he rides along the road and over the drawbridge. Incredibly realistic hoofbeats fill the air as you approach the castle, and spoken passages urgently convey the story once inside. Only at a few points in the remainder of the game are the graphics as strong as they are in this sequence, but the sound effects — though often repetitive — remain convincing throughout.



If you've played any of SSI's three *Eye of the Beholder* games, or FTL's *Dungeon Master* (which in its original incarnation was probably the earliest FRP to utilize a first-person perspective) *Lore*'s interface is instantly accessible. The top-right third



of the screen is given over to a first-person view of your surroundings, with portraits of you and your fellow adventurers below this graphic window. At the bottom left are two buttons — one for sending party members into sleepland (for healing) and another for accessing game functions such as saves, loads, options, and exiting the game. Above these buttons are arrows you can click on to guide your party, but most players will probably opt for keyboard control of movement.

Beneath the portraits is a scrollable inventory bar, the first obvious interface improvement. In most FRPs, each character has an individual inventory — a realistic system, but one that can prove rather tedious over the course of a game. In order for one character to use an item carried by another, you usually have to open the inventory of the character possessing the item, select the item, then move it to the other character's inventory. *Lore*'s inventory system is much less realistic — the characters don't have backpacks with a limited number of available slots, weight limitations, and so on — but it's much, much easier to use. Since Westwood has opted for this system, though, it might as well have gone whole-hog and used two or even three separate inventory bars. Why? Because in the heat of the game's real-time battle system (more on this later), trying to find that crucial healing salve quickly can be vexing, to say the least. But the new inventory system is still a smart design decision that makes it easy to concentrate on the game rather than the mechanics of play.



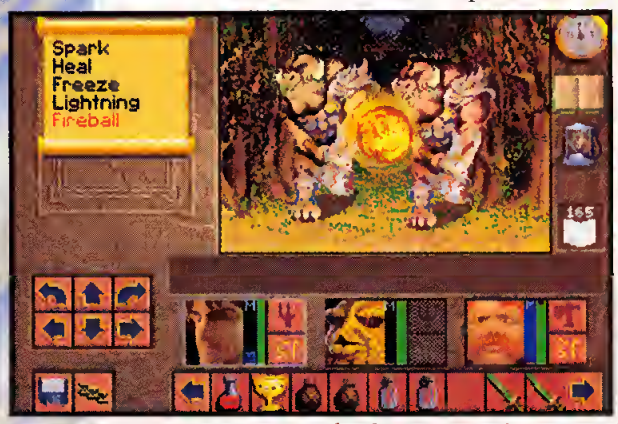



OFFICIAL
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition
COMPUTER GAME
DARK·SUN™
WORLD
SHATTERED LANDS
Come and get it!
IBM Clue Book available!
TO ORDER BY VISA/MC: Call
1-800-245-4525 (in USA & Canada).
ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, DARK SUN, the TSR logo and all TSR characters, character names and the distinctive likenesses there ot are trademarks owned by and used under license from TSR, Inc.
©1993 TSR, Inc. ©1993 Strategic Simulations, Inc. All rights reserved.
Product Informati r 113
SSI
TSR Inc.

This isn't the only example of good interface design. At the top left, highly visible and easily accessed, is a list of available magic spells. When you find a scroll containing a new spell, you simply left-click on the scroll to grab it, drag it with the mouse above a character's portrait, and right-click to have him or her learn it. To choose a spell to cast, just click on the always-available spell list. There's no memorizing, scribing, recalling, or any of the other "realistic" systems in other FRPs, and the result is a highly usable magic system.



On the right side of the main window are such useful items as a compass, a map, and a lantern. The map automatically updates itself, giving you essential information such as the locations of secret doors, teleporters, and all the important items you've found. Lighting the lantern is a simple matter of finding an oil flask, dragging it over to the lantern icon, and left-clicking. Together, these seemingly minor interface improvements make for extremely smooth game play.



Lands of Lore has other good qualities. For one, it's quite addictive, and you'll find yourself spending *many* hours trying to reach a conclusion. Second, you can load games anytime, even during combat — no more waiting for an inevitable death before giving it another go. Finally, the game installs and plays flawlessly under Microsoft Windows — and given the ubiquity of Windows, this is a cue other publishers would be wise to follow.

There's no denying that *Lands of Lore* is both enjoyable and user-friendly, but several troublesome qualities lurk beneath the handsome exterior. The bad news starts with a minor gripe about the combat system, but this quickly leads to problems with story and innovation — problems that make *Lore* an essentially unimportant game, one that might satisfy temporarily but may quickly be forgotten. This is hardly unusual in the FRP world, but it's too bad that such obvious design effort wasn't put to better use.



As in *Eye of the Beholder*, *Lore* employs a real-time combat system. Unlike phased combat, in which you can take all the time you need to ponder the actions for each member of your party, monsters don't wait on your input before attacking. This system lends a slight arcade element to the game, and considerable excitement. But it works well only when your party consists of a single character, because you can't control the entire party with just one attack button. Instead, you must move the mouse arrow from one character's attack button to the next, losing a few seconds in the process. Fortunately, your party rarely has more than two members, so the problem here is less acute than in the first two *Beholder* games (*Eye III* has an All Attack option). Still, a way to make everyone in the party strike simultaneously would make combat much less frustrating.

The biggest problem of all, though, is the fact that when all is said and done, *Lands of Lore* accomplishes nothing new. Yes, it improves on a number of FRP issues, particularly ease of play, but a couple hours into it and you'll realize you've done all this before. After the extremely promising introductory sequence, and a good lead-in to the story and your relationship with other characters, *Lore* quickly becomes a game of rooms and corridors, the type of adventure we've seen again and again over the past dozen years. True, only a small part of *Lore* takes place in a dungeon, but the forests, caves, mines, and other locales are structured the same way: You travel in straight lines (you can't duck under trees), turn at right angles, and, in the underground areas, encounter locked doors, locked chests, puzzles involving steel plates, secret entrances, buttons to push, and wheels to turn. All the things, in other words, that have been in FRPs since they began.

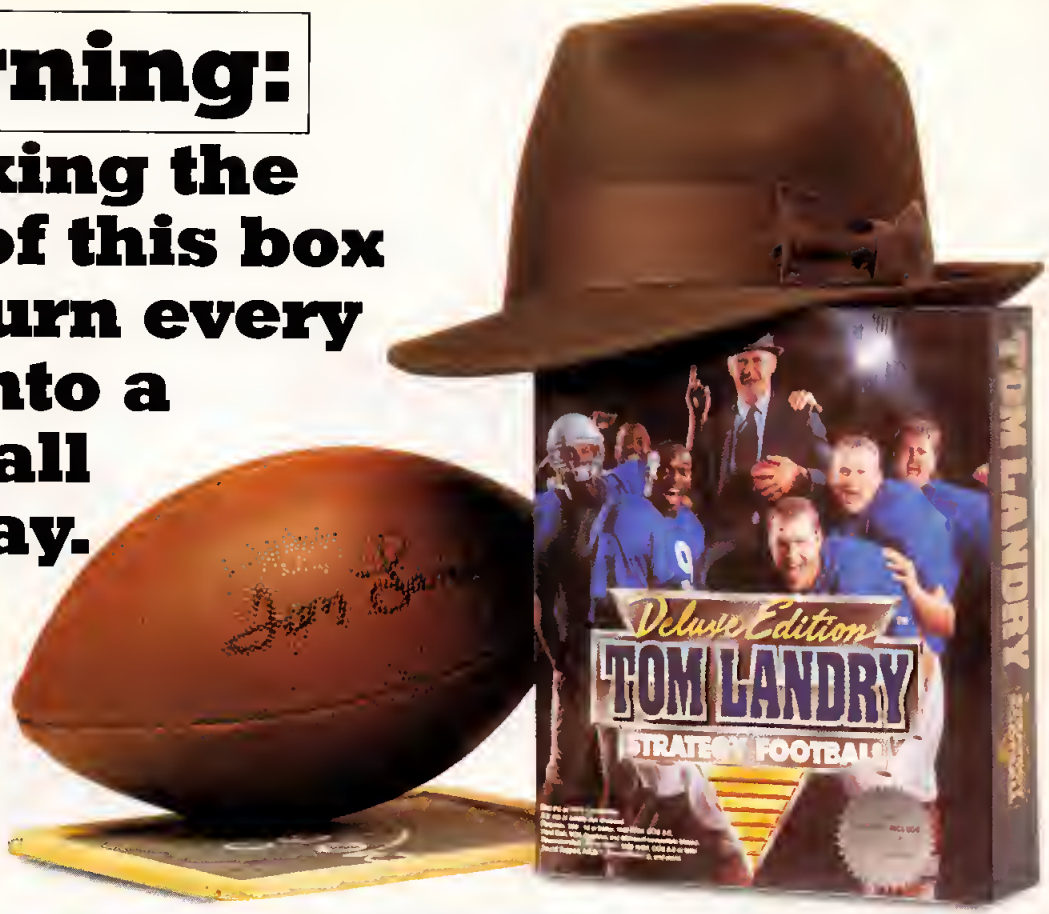
Your mission in the game is to save the king's life. To do that, you've got to locate the recipe for an elixir, track down the ingredients, then find the king and make the elixir work. That's it. There are no interesting subplots, there's little character interaction, and the main plot simply hangs there like a coat on a rack. You're teased into thinking you're on track, only to realize that you've yet another hurdle to clear — and the hurdles, as we've seen all too often in this genre, are very often combat-oriented. The combat in *Lore* isn't as annoyingly frequent as in many FRPs, and you do at least see creatures moving toward you, but there's still far too much of it to remain interesting. Worse still, you almost never have a compelling motivation for all the death you deal: things attack you, so you just blow them away.

Lands of Lore doesn't hold the patent on these flaws; they're imbedded in most fantasy role-playing games, and *Lore* is better than many of them. But in the face of products like Dynamix's *Betrayal at Krondor* (a watershed game that raises the FRP stakes considerably) or even Sir-Tech's *Crusaders of the Dark Savant* (an old-style fantasy game with significant, unique features), *Lands of Lore* seems instantly retrograde despite its undeniable strengths. It may be at the *front* of the rut in which the FRP genre finds itself, but a rut is still a rut, and it's time to break out of it.

Virgin Games, 18061 Fitch Avenue, Suite C, Irvine CA 92714

Warning:

Breaking the seal of this box will turn every day into a football Sunday.



Introducing Tom Landry Strategy Football Deluxe Edition

He invented the "flex," reintroduced the "shotgun," won five NFC Championships, two Superbowls, and a place in the Hall of Fame. Now, Tom Landry's 29 years of winning football strategy are yours to explore in this new eye-popping, mind-challenging computer game: Tom Landry Strategy Football Deluxe Edition!

More Football Strategy Than Ever!

The Deluxe Edition builds on the success of the original TLSF game, adding five new offensive schemes, a variety of defensive line formations, man in motion options, an improved computer coach, and special blitzing calls. Play a single game or track your favorite team through a regular season.





If it's in football, it's in our Deluxe Edition!

Put Yourself In The Game!

New league editor features let you actually change player names and attributes to place yourself in the game! Play by college or pro rules. Match teams from different eras. With the new TLSF Deluxe Edition, computer coaching styles, playcalling tendencies — even team jersey colors — are all up to you!

New, Improved Graphics And Animation!

Tom Landry fans asked for it. The Deluxe Edition has it! You'll thrill to our on-screen weather conditions, improved play resolution, and improved Instant Replay facility. Plus, you'll find in-depth stats by game, week, or season, detailed down to the individual conference leaders!

$49.95 SUGGESTED RETAIL

Tom Landry Strategy Football Deluxe Edition!

Whether you play the computer, against a friend, or over a modem, put football's greatest mind in your hands with the new TLSF Deluxe Edition. Call Merit Software, and order today!



1-800-238-4277

Merit Software™

IBM® PC and Compatibles 3.5" (1.44 MB) disk enclosed. Requires: DOS 5.0 or higher, 286 or higher, 1MB RAM, VGA Graphics, Hard Disk, and Mouse. Recommended: DOS 5.0 and 12 MHz or faster. Sound Support: Ad Lib,™ Sound Blaster™, PC speaker and more.

13707 Gamma Rd., Dallas, TX 75244
214-385-2353 ©1993 Merit Software

SIMFARM

Category: Simulation

Publisher: Maxis

Developer: Maxis

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
286/12, Hard Drive w/ 3 MB free, 640K RAM DOS 3.3 Or Higher EGA, Sound Support Mouse	386SX/16, 2 MB RAM DOS 5.0 or Memory Manager Supported Sound Cards VGA

Maxis subtitles *SimFarm* as "*SimCity*'s Country Cousin," and that's a pretty accurate description. In fact, this latest entry in the Maxis line of "Sim" software toys feels closer to the original *SimCity* game experience than any of the other titles — *SimLife*, *SimEarth*, and *SimAnt* — that have appeared since that classic's release.

SELBY BATEMAN

Instead of managing a city, you're given complete control of a fledgling farm. But strange as it may sound, many of the problems you encounter and the decisions you must make in *SimFarm* will remind you of *SimCity*. Financial resource management is key to *SimFarm*, just as in *SimCity*, and the only way to achieve fiscal prosperity is to juggle a wide range of management activities simultaneously.

Unless you were raised on a farm — or are currently a farmer — the learning curve in *SimFarm* is significantly steeper than in *SimCity*. There's a





A time when the world seemed more fantastic: and anything was possible!

Journey back in time to the year 1957 on an expedition to the dark heart of the Amazon Basin. A desparate, crazed message sends you on a perilous search through a land where legends come to life, danger hides behind every corner, and incredible treasures wait to be discovered.

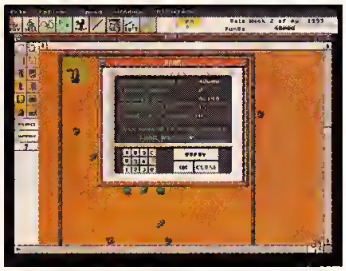
AMAZON is designed in the style of the serials of the 1940's and 50's such as Flash Gordon, The Lost City, and Rocketman.

These serials were made up of intriguing, fast paced episodes which placed the hero in unbelievable peril. AMAZON contains 14 exciting episodes filled with plot twists, mysterious characters and heart stopping cliff-hangers. You haven't had this much fun since the drive-in days!



Metal monsters seek your destruction!*

lot of farming and crop information to distill and place in context; as a city boy, I approached *SimFarm* barely knowing sorghum from soybeans or an herbicide from a fungicide. And I certainly didn't know that onions can be planted in both January and June, that oats are sensitive to over-watering, and that while corn removes a lot of nutrients from the soil, soybeans *add* nutrients.



In other words, when it comes to farming, I don't know beans.

And obviously, that knowledge is very important. As you plunge into your first few farms — borrowing heavily from the bank and crossing your fingers — you must learn how to choose the right mix of crops, when and how much to water and fertilize, and when to sell your crops directly or take your chances by selling through the futures market.

Fortunately, as with its earlier products, Maxis has loaded the *SimFarm* manual with good, accessible information. And once you get used to the icons, the game's interface is easy to use.

The manual includes a 41-page section on the history of farming, as well as a glossary of farming terms. Another 6 pages give a detailed explanation of the equipment you'll be buying and using — small silos, barns, tractors, harvesters, sprayers, and even crop dusters. Four pages are given over to explaining in detail the 24 crops you can choose





Battle for your life at the Bridge of Death!*

Pulse pounding excitement with full motion video sequences and synchronized speech.

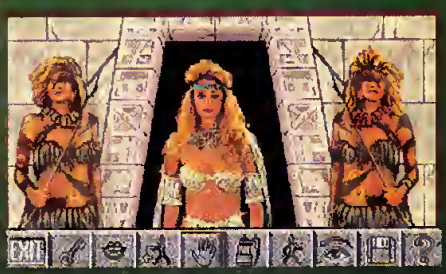


They grow them big in these parts!*

•A Multimedia Entertainment Extravaganza!
•Super VGA and VGA Modes.
•Rich Characterizations.
•A Cliff Hanger around every corner!
•From the designers of the Award Winning Martian Memorandum.

ACCESS SOFTWARE INCORPORATED

ACCESS Software, Inc., 4910 West Amelia Earhart Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84116 • (801)359-2900 • (800)800-4880



Gasp in disbelief at the lost tribe of Amazon women!*

*Actual Amazon VGA screens.

Product Information Number 101

to plant. You'll need to study these details carefully so you can choose crops that are appropriate to both the soil type and quality in the section of the country you've chosen to farm *and* to the market where you'll ultimately sell the fruits of your labor.

Perhaps the most helpful information in the manual is the five pages of farming strategies, which can go a long way toward helping you get started. There are general recommendations and specific suggestions relating to field conditions, planting, machinery, and livestock.



A good tutorial takes you through your first farming experience. You can elect to locate your farm in any of eight regions across the U.S., each with its own unique climate, soil, and growing-season. *SimFarm* also allows you to customize your farm's characteristics — you choose levels of rainfall, temperature, wind speed, and whether or not there is a river or lake on the land. If you don't like the looks of the computer-generated landscape, you can keep trying until you get something more suited to your tastes.



Like most real farmers, you'll start off by borrowing from the bank. Bulldoze the rocks from the land, and then start buying sheds, tractors, plows, crops — the works. After you get your first crop in the ground, you'll need to start monitoring the weather, the moisture levels of the soil, and a range of other factors. It's satisfying to see a little tractor zipping around the field, carrying out your commands. And when your crops are ready to bring in and take to market (or to store, for later sale) the harvester comes out of its shed and does its thing.

There are a host of other details to take in consideration. Tractors and trucks don't come cheap, so you'll have to lay out capital for dirt roads to prolong the life of your farm machinery.





Do you choose chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, or take the organic route instead, and select plants that will minimize the damage caused by pests and disease? There's a town near your spread regardless of what region of the country you chose, and as your fortunes rise the town will grow. You may want to build a paved road to town (again to save wear and tear on your vehicles), and you may want to convince the town to build an airport so that you can get that crop duster you've always wanted. As you harvest and sell, watch your balance sheet carefully — money is a scarce commodity, as you'll certainly notice while stumbling your way through the first few games.

But over time, you'll learn why it's a good idea to plant trees as a wind break, to stagger plantings,



and to consult the Farm Bureau before you plant. There are many subtle tricks to keeping machinery in good condition, placing ditches for irrigation, and strategically orienting water troughs for livestock. Just pray that disasters such as tornados, locust infestations, droughts, and floods don't ruin your fortunes.

Many aspects of farming are necessarily simplified, both to enhance game play and to keep the simulating moving along at a good pace. The *SimFarm* game designers even apologize in the manual to real farmers, who might argue with some of the growing timetables, watering levels, etc.

It remains to be seen whether there will be as many eager sim-farmers as there have been sim-city managers. Farming isn't the first career path most people consider, and it does take some patience to learn the winning crop and planting combinations that can make your farm a success. But if you're hankering to try the farming life without getting your fingers dirty or going into deep debt, you'll find *SimFarm* a fascinating, fun, sometimes frustrating challenge very much in the *SimCity* tradition.

Maxis, 2 Theatre Square, Orinda CA 94563-3346

PAGAN

Ultima VIII™

AVATAR™, YOU'RE NOT IN BRITANNIA ANYMORE!

Foiled by your defense of Britannia, the evil Guardian transports you to a world already under his dominion. Now you must confront alien realms and powerful new enemies in a battle without allies. But wait! Perhaps more has changed than just the battlefield . . . ?

- **Incredibly smooth and lifelike animation — 400 frames of art per character (1200 frames for the Avatar) and *10 times* the art of any previous Ultima!**
- **A new, more natural perspective.**
- **Compatibility with EMS, XMS and all other common memory management systems.**
- **Twice as many frames per second, producing a richer, faster story in this luxuriously detailed world!**











Actual screens may vary.

ORIGIN®
We create worlds®
An Electronic Arts® Company
P.O. BOX 161750 AUSTIN, TX 78716

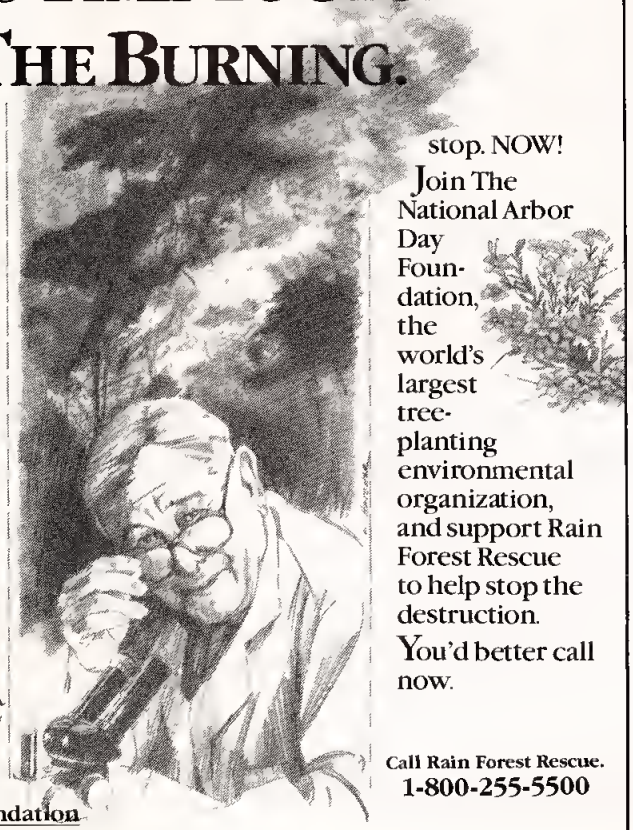
Look for the new *Pagan* Clue Book!

Pagan and Avatar are trademarks of ORIGIN Systems, Inc. Ultima, Origin, and We create worlds are registered trademarks of ORIGIN Systems, Inc.
Copyright © 1993 ORIGIN Systems, Inc. Electronic Arts is a registered trademark of Electronic Arts. For IBM PC and 100% compatible systems.

Available at a software retailer near you, or call 1-800-245-4525 for MC/Visa/Discover orders.

Product Information Number 102

IT'S TIME TO STOP THE BURNING.



96,000 acres of irreplaceable rain forest are burned every day.

The rain forest is the world's greatest pharmaceutical storehouse. It provides sources for a quarter of today's drugs and medicines and seventy percent of the plants found to have anticancer properties.

This senseless destruction must stop. NOW!

Join The National Arbor Day Foundation, the world's largest tree-planting environmental organization, and support Rain Forest Rescue to help stop the destruction.

You'd better call now.

Rain Forest Rescue.

The National Arbor Day Foundation

Call Rain Forest Rescue.
1-800-255-5500

HOW TO CONTACT US

To order a subscription: Use the order form bound into this magazine.

To order back issues or to get help with a subscription question or problem: Call (201) 703-9505, or write to Game Players; Customer Service; 23-00 Route 208; Fair Lawn, NY 07410

For editorial questions: Due to the volume of calls we receive, we are unable to take editorial questions or game-counseling questions by phone. However, we love to receive your letters of comments, questions, and suggestions. When possible, we try to respond in the magazine. Write to Game Players; Editorial Department; 300-A South Westgate Drive; Greensboro, NC 27407

To order reprints or receive permission to reuse: Send your written request to Game Players; Editorial Reprints; 300-A South Westgate Drive; Greensboro, NC 27404.

FAST, FREE INFORMATION!

Want More Information About Products and Advertisers Featured in This Issue?

1. Circle the numbers on the attached reply card to received FREE information on advertised products. Product Information Numbers may be found at the bottom of each advertisement.

2. Print your name and address and mail today!

IT'S THAT EASY!

ADVERTISER INDEX

Company	Page Number	Product Information Number
Access	84-85	101
Accolade	49,73	128
Activision /Infocom	21,63,93	106
Baseline Publishing	19	138
Blue Ribbon Soundworks	10	141
Broderbund	IFC	110
CH Products	45	127
Electronic Arts	47	140
GEnie	1	162
Hi Tech Expression	12-13	134
Hollyware	11	130
IBM	39	135
Legend Entertainment	71	215
Logitech	9	216
LucasArts	34-35	136
Mallard	77	132
Megatech	95	183
Merit Software	83	220
MicroProse	29,51,65,IBC	221
Microsoft	14-15	—
Origin	59,87	102
Psygnosis	25,69,91	103
Quickshot	79	119
Sierra On-Line	BC	109
Sir-Tech	3	111
Spectrum Holobyte	6-7,33	112
SSI	41,81	113
Triax	57	139
Viacom New Media	5	137
Virgin Interactive	52-53	116
Game Players:		
PC Entertainment	17	
CD-ROM Today	99	

For additional information on Game Players back issues and encyclopedias call (201) 703-9505

WING COMMANDER ACADEMY

Category: Space-Combat Simulation

Publisher: Origin

Developer: Origin

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386SX/16 MHz	386DX/40 MHz
2 MB RAM	Disk-caching utility
DOS 5.0 or higher	Supported sound cards (Sound Blaster-compatible for speech)
VGA	Joystick

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

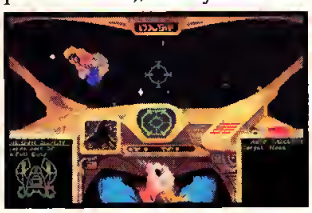
A conventional review of this product seems almost superfluous: If it does what its advertisements claim it does, the most powerful tractor beam in the galaxy wouldn't stop *Wing Commander* fans from scarfing up every copy in sight.

Well, fellow *Wing Commander* addicts, it *does*, and then some. Origin seems to have taken every rational suggestion from the series' legion of fans and wrapped them into one gorgeous package. Even the most experienced and battle-tested joystick jockies will find that *WCA* delivers all the

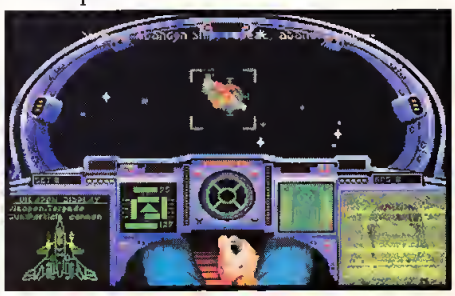


action and challenge they've ever wished for. The multiplicity of options and features, along with the inclusion of the seemingly unbeatable "Gauntlet" arcade game, give this product virtually unlimited replay value.

A list of *WCA*'s features will excite any *Wing Commander* fan who hasn't already bought the program: You can custom-design any kind of mission you want (including pilot rescue and datapod retrieval), on any level of difficulty you desire,



from either the Confederation or the Kilrathi side; you can fly or fight against 17 different spacecraft; and if you're really feeling masochistic, you can even add asteroid belts and minefields. Two new types of spacecraft are available, including the unbelievably *hot* new Confederation Wraith. Billed as "the fastest ship in the universe," this baby is armored like Fort Knox and carries the awesome new Leech missile.



But that's not all. You can set up random scenarios in which the computer throws you into battle against an unpredictable — and usually formidable — mix of opponents. You can save as many as two dozen custom missions to floppy disk and trade them with other *Wing Commander* fans, or upload individual mission files to bulletin boards or modem them to a friend.

In every mission you can go it alone, or choose from among four wingmen (including Maniac, whose tendency to reckless grandstanding has not mellowed with time). And if you really think you're hot stuff, you can learn repeated lessons in humility by flying the Gauntlet: 15 levels of 3 waves each against enemies who get progressively tougher as the scenario progresses. I fancied myself a pretty fair dogfighter, having beaten all previous *Wing Commander* games, but after two weeks of running the Gauntlet, I still haven't made it past level 7-3. It's hard to imagine how tough the foes are in the higher levels — but I intend to keep trying until I find out.

Origin has wrapped all these features with an interface that simply couldn't be any cleaner or easier to learn. It only takes a minute or two to set up the most elaborate custom missions.

Try as I might, I can only think of one thing Origin left out: a chance to attack a Kilrathi space station. Oh well, you can always choose to fly a Kilrathi ship and attack one of the Confederation stations that *can* be placed in the custom missions. A traitorous act, perhaps, but those space stations make such a wonderful spectacle when they blow up that few will be able to resist trying it.



Best of all, *Wing Commander Academy* is a stand-alone game; you don't need any of the previous games in the series to enjoy this mission builder, nor will lack of familiarity with the system in any way compromise your enjoyment of *WCA*. You can jump right in and cut to the chase without any worries about whether you'll "win" or "lose" an entire campaign.

Thank you, Origin; you have answered many prayers.

Origin Systems, P.O. Box 161750, Austin TX 78716

ARMOUR-GEDDON

Category: Military Strategy

Publisher: Psygnosis

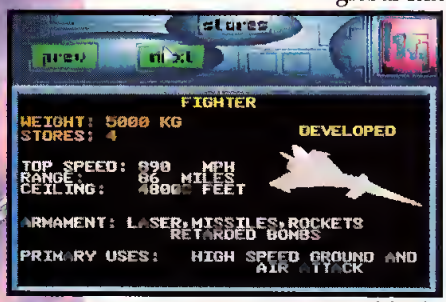
Developer: Psygnosis

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
286/10MHz	386/25MHz
640K RAM	Supported Sound Cards
Hard drive	Mouse
VGA or EGA	

RANDY PALMER

What do you get when you mix a flight-sim engine and a future-shock scenario with elements of *Utopia* and *Mega-LO-Mania*, scaling polygon graphics, monstrous mutating enemies, and enough bells and whistles to make your head spin? Why, *Armour-Geddon*, of course.



Welcome to the year 2052, 55 years after a global nuclear exchange poisoned much of the Earth's surface. Though there were some survivors who escaped the holocaust by going underground, they don't feel so lucky now — they're engaged in a running battle against the irradiated surface-dwellers, with their nuclear-powered minds and mutating molecules.

The underground dwellers, known as Shelts, developed the Earth Defense Network (EDEN) back in 2002, partitioning the surface of the Earth into habitable and non-habitable sectors. In one of these inhospitable sectors, EDEN personnel have discovered the remnants of an unexploded neutron bomb, the only device capable of destroying the mutants' fearsome Beam Cannon. If that's not enough background for you, just check out the rest of the 107-page instruction manual. Psygnosis has provided oodles and oodles of neat sci-fi timelines, charts, calendars, diagrams, and esoteric historical data, all of which help make *Armour-Geddon* seem to be more than merely a game.



But alas, this background story is a lot more interesting than the game proper. Fire up the program and take the old Heavy Tank out for a spin around the block, and you'll find yourself in the midst of plains, mountains, rivers, lakes, airstrips, colonies...oh, yeah, and enemies. The game's polygon graphics during these sequences are decent, but seem a bit plain after what we've seen done with texture-mapping and shaded polygons in other recent sims (*Aces Over Europe*, *IndyCar Racing*, *Strike Commander*, etc.).

The game map is fairly large — 250 square miles — so you've got plenty of territory to cover in military vehicles such as tanks, stealth fighters, and hovercrafts, but before you fly 'em or drive 'em, you gotta build 'em. That means allocating



resources, scientists, and engineers to develop and manufacture each craft. You can hop into the cockpit of any vehicle; once there, you can cycle through various interior and exterior views with the simple press of a button.

Oops....Did I say simple? The interface during these combat sequences is hopelessly cluttered and confusing, and although you can use a mouse, joystick, or the keyboard, none is easy to master. It's a good thing the game comes with a keyboard map that displays the various keystrokes and their functions: There are at least 70 functioning control buttons for the Teleport, Gun Turrets, Emergency Beacon, Telepod, Camera L/R/U/D, Zoom-In/Out, Internal, External 1 and 2, H.Q., Abort Serial Link, Radar Reset, Throttle, and so forth. Many keys have an alternate Shift function as well. Whew!



Armour-Geddon is obviously a complicated game, but it's not really a complex game. If you're up to memorizing the controls, and can spend enough time in the practice mode (a training scenario where the enemies don't fire at you...well, at least not very much), then *Armour-Geddon* should offer a fair dose of fun. And Psygnosis has included a modem-play feature, always a plus for any type of war game.

But in the final analysis, it's the fans who thrive on the likes of Avalon Hill's tabletop wargames (the ones with those 100-page rulebooks) that will feel most at home in the cockpit of *Armour-Geddon*. All others, take cover.

Psygnosis, 675 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139

SEE JACK RUN.
SEE JACK PLAY.
SEE JACK WHEEL.
SEE JACK DEAL.
SEE JACK STEAL.
SEE JACK PAY TAXES.
OR NEVER SEE JACK AGAIN.



Meet Jack Ladd, a jack of all trades, most of them illegal. Jack's in big trouble. You see this is the future and now the IRS has the right to use deadly force to collect taxes. Guess what Jack, the tax man commeth, and they're looking for the gazillion bucks you owe them. Now you have only 28 days to get them the money, how you do it is up to you.

Join Jack as he cons and coerces his way through the backstreets and alleys on the seedy side of the galaxy. Eight-way scrolling, full perspective scaling and Hypertext-style interaction give this game a colorful and realistic edge. This unusual adventure captures your imagination and thrusts you right into the heart of Jack Ladd's bizarre world.

If you can't find this game at your favorite retailer call: (800) 438-7794 (GET PSYG) to order your copy today.







PSYGNOSIS

Psygnosis
675 Massachusetts Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 497-7794

Innocent is available on IBM compatible and Amiga formats.

Product Information Number 103

STRONGHOLD

Category: Strategy/Fantasy

Publisher: Strategic Simulations

Developer: Stormfront Studios

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386, Hard drive 2MB RAM VGA Mouse	386/25 MHz or better Supported sound cards

Strategic Simulations' AD&D games have been successful for years, although there hasn't been much variation in the series. But now, developer Stormfront Studios has hit upon a unique new approach, set in the original Dungeons & Dragons world. *Stronghold* incorporates the fantasy elements inherent to the D&D universe into a game of kingdom-building and conquest. The result is an entertaining excursion into fantasy world-building that succeeds where similar titles (*Realms*, *Mega-lo-Mania*, etc.) failed.

T. LIAM MCDONALD

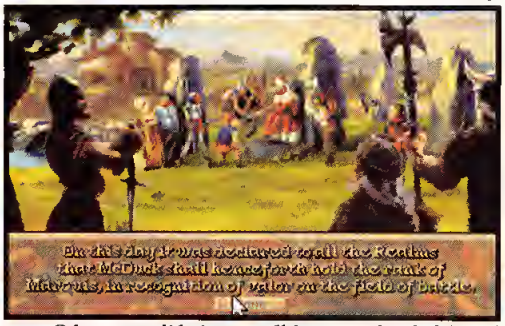
In a run-of-the-mill FRP, you create a party of adventurers with different attributes, then roam the countryside hacking at monsters and looking for booty. *Stronghold* provides a completely different challenge. You still generate a "party," consisting of a king (you) and four vassals, choosing from numerous races, classes, attributes, and skills. The usual range of fighters, mages, thieves, dwarves, and others are available, complete with spells, weapons, and hit points. But instead of walking together through the land, each of the vassals is placed somewhere on a map with a group of followers and told to build a castle. These castles have to be located near the king and *his* castle, and the result is a monarch encircled by his four vassals. Each landowner imbues his people with his own attributes, and these people then go about building, farming, working, and fighting.



Once the castles are built, you can choose to build other structures to improve your subjects' general welfare. Providing food is most important, but close behind are housing and industry. People are only happy as long as they're fed, working, and sheltered—and if they're not happy, their leader's rating goes down and production decreases.



You can channel the efforts of your citizens in one of three ways: training (to increase the skill of fighting units), building (to speed construction), or recruiting (to gain new units). The number of people dedicated to these tasks is set with a pyramid divided into three sections; the larger a particular section, the more people allocated to that task. As time goes by and more units appear, some can be assigned to work the homefront and others held in reserve.



Of course, life is not all hoeing the field and building marketplaces. You can count on some combat; just how much depends on the hostility level you choose at the beginning of the game. Victory conditions in the game are determined by each leader's alignment. A Lawful leader gains points by building a stable, happy society and reaching the rank of Emperor. A leader with a Chaotic alignment can't succeed until all enemy strongholds are destroyed. The Neutral leader must accomplish both these goals.

The usual assortment of D&D monsters are on hand, only this time they're establishing strongholds and societies! Imagine blast spores, giant toads, and dragons building competitive civilizations, and you have a pretty good idea of what *Stronghold* has in store for you.



With its many different terrain options and hostility settings, wide variety of party members, and different conditions for victory, *Stronghold* has plenty of replay value. Terrain graphics are quite good, and sound is functional and effective, if not inspired. A clean interface makes it easy to control variables and game play. Stormfront Studios has put a new twist on the familiar D&D world to create an interesting, fairly challenging, and very entertaining game. Bring on the dragons!

SSI, 675 Almanor Ave., Suite 201, Sunnyvale CA 94086-2901

" The humor and originality of Zork
are always present... its images are the most spectacular
in the history of video games"

-JOYSTICK MAGAZINE

"The interface may be revolutionary [and] allows a richness
that has been absent heretofore in graphic adventures."

-Johnny L. Wilson, COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

An epic adventure...underground.

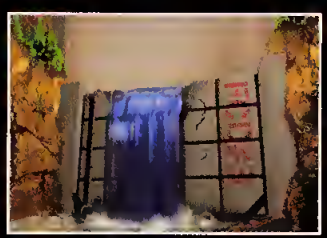
RETURN TO ZORK™



A Cast of Hollywood Actors



Over 1 hour of Spoken Dialogue



Revisit Flood Control Dam #3



Try to Outwit Devious Dwarves

STARRING JASON HERVEY ROBIN LIVELY A.J.LANGER JASON LIVELY EOAN GROSS SAM JONES PRODUCED BY INFOCOM IN ASSOCIATION WITH ACTIVISION PRODUCTION DESIGNER JOE ASPERIN SCREENPLAY BY MICHELE EM

INFOCOM MUSIC BY NATHAN WANG AND TERI MASON SPECIAL EFFECTS BY WILLIAM VOLK BASED ON A DESIGN BY DOUG BARNETT EXECUTIVE PRODUCER EDDIE DOMBROWER DIRECTED BY PETER SPRAGUE ACTIVISION

Available for IBM and Compatibles. Enhanced version for CD-ROM also available.
To order: See your local retailer or call 1-800-477-3650
Product Information Number 106

PETER PAN

Category: Education

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: Electronic Arts

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386/16 MHz 2 MB RAM Hard Drive VGA Mouse	386/25 MHz Sound Blaster or Compatible Sound Card

LEE BUCHANAN

Few stories delight children more than the enduring tale of Peter Pan, and now kids can step into Peter's magical world with this fun, friendly game from EA*Kids, Electronic Arts' educational software division. *Peter Pan* gives young children a chance to create their own cartoon adventure in Neverland, using simple tools to help Peter battle pirates and rescue Wendy from the evil Captain Hook.

To help Peter in his adventure, children have access to some special magic. The Paintbox Pals magical drawing tools — a pencil, a paintbrush, an eraser, and a spray-paint tool -- allow the player to find a solution to Peter's plight, often with an amusing outcome.



When Peter gets in trouble, he turns and asks for help, sometimes addressing the player by name. When this happens, The Paintbox Pals — animated characters perched at the bottom of the screen — offer their assistance. Each one can do the job, so there are several solutions to each scene. Younger kids can just watch as Peter finds his own way out of each predicament.

Sally Sprayer's magic mist, for instance, turns a menacing pirate into an old witch who flies away on her broom. Painting the pirate white with Jazz Painter puts him in the deep freeze. And when a menacing crocodile prevents Peter from crossing a stream, the player can pick Nick Lead, the pencil, and choose from four objects to draw: Drawing a balloon allows Peter to float to the other side, while penciling in a bridge lets the hero step over the croc. Not all of the options work, however. Draw a boat and the croc just snaps it in two.

Every aspect of *Peter Pan* has been given a light-hearted touch, without a hint of violence or meanness. All it takes is a bit of pixie dust or a magic eraser to defeat the bad guys. Even the sword-wielding pirates are funny, and not at all threatening.



The graphics are rich and cartoon-like, with vividly rendered characters and background scenery. Sound Blaster-compatible sound effects and music are adequate, with a bit of digitized speech thrown in for good measure. And the interface is perfect for young players. The mouse pointer moves slowly, and the simple menus are large and easy to access. The forgiving drawing tools don't demand too much precision — ideal for young hands not accustomed to a mouse.

A very young child can just watch the story unfold, but as soon as he or she is ready to step into the action, clever prompts show where to use the drawing tools on the screen. A simple mouse-click turns the pointer into one of the four drawing tools, with areas of the screen highlighted for connect-the-dots drawing or painting.

The documentation is well-suited for children, including an activity book that introduces players to the animated tools in a fun and instructive manner. *Peter Pan* also comes with a theater feature for previewing other EA*Kids games.

Though at first glance the game seems a bit short, the various tools that are available to solve each of the 27 scenes give *Peter Pan* a new look each time you make your way through the story. Two or three of the Paintbox Pals offer their help in each



predicament, and Jazz Painter and Nick Lead each offer several options when they're called upon. Two other tools — an hourglass to replay scenes and a bookmark to go to any scene — enhance the game's flexibility.

Peter Pan is sure to entertain, whether your children enjoy it interactively or just sit back and watch the story unfold. From its design to its documentation, it's a game that should keep kids coming back to Neverland.

Electronic Arts, 1450 Fashian Island Blvd., San Mateo CA 94404-2064

DRAGON KNIGHT III

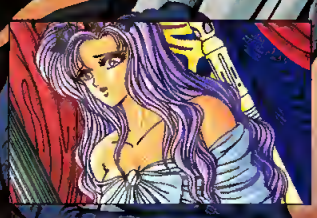
Enter a World of Demons and Damsels. If You Dare.

For centuries, war has raged among the demons and fairies, devastating this mystical land. Twin brothers, born to mortals, are separated at birth, chosen for the ultimate battle that will decide the fate of heaven and earth. They later meet, never knowing their true relation — or their own dark destiny. Fated to duel your twin to the death, you must fight to stay alive and rescue lovely, innocent maidens from the clutches of menacing foes. And perhaps, become the ruler of all.

So the challenge is on! An incomparable role playing fantasy game for your PC, with stunning, hand sculpted graphics throughout, numerous scripts and a thrilling plot. But be warned — with its voluptuous women and intense action, Dragon Knight III is for mature audiences only. And not for the faint hearted.

Available now at your nearest dealer or call **1-800-258-MEGA**. Or write Megatech, P.O. Box 11333, Torrance, CA 90510. Visa, Mastercard, checks accepted.







...ments: 286-20 or faster machine ...d) with 640K RAM, hard disk, ... Operating Sys.: MS DOS 3.3 ... 5.1. Graphics compatible with ... Sound Blaster, Sound Blaster ... Thunder Board, Roland, Tandy ... Spectrum, Adlib Gold ...

NR-18 This game is not for the faint hearted. Contains violence and some material inappropriate for minors

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR PLAYERS UNDER 18.

For a free demo, call our 24hr. BBS at 310-539-7739. (8N1)

MEGA TECH

All companies and product names mentioned are trademarks or registered trademarks of the respective owners.

Product Information Number 183

Real Ordinary



There's more to games than a mouth that sort of moves or tinny sound. Now play PC games and feel just like you're sitting in a theater controlling the action with your joystick.

It's ReelMagic,™ the new MPEG playback adapter from Sigma Designs.

ReelMagic™



Get the full-blown multimedia kit, or spring for just the board if you already have the rest of the gear.

Our add-in board brings the next generation of CD-ROM games to your PC bigger than life.

Say adios to wimpy graphics. Herky-jerky movement. Bogus sound. And phony

ACTIVISION. | SIERRA® | trilobyte | Interplay™ | Virgin GAMES | COMPTON'S NEWMEDIA

READYSOFT | aris entertainment | ACCESS SOFTWARE INCORPORATED

Discover the new generation of ReelMagic games from these manufacturers, and look for more exciting titles coming soon.

ReelMagic



scenarios.ReelMagic pumps up the reality meter so you can crank up the fantasy.

We've also included Activision's *Return to Zork* to experience the excitement of full motion video now.

PCComputing MVP 93 FINALIST
ReelMagic Adapter

It's not real unless it's ReelMagic. Call 1-800-845-8086 ext. 311 for a dealer demo near you. Or you can stick with real ordinary. Oh joy!



256 VS. 32,768 COLORS Why settle for a mere 256 colors, offered by current PC games, when ReelMagic gives you theater-quality graphics with over 32,000?

GRUNTS VS. CD-QUALITY AUDIO Get 16-bit CD-quality sound that plays Sound Blaster™ and Windows™ compatible software. The 8-bit audio you're used to just doesn't compare.

5 FPS VS. 30 FPS ReelMagic-compatible games run at 30 frames-per-second, TRUE full-motion, so you avoid jerky, blocky images.

1/4 VS. FULL SCREEN Now you can get theater-quality video in a full-screen image for a realistic, movie-like experience.

Only ReelMagic Makes It Real.™

SIGMA DESIGNS®

© 1993 Sigma Designs Inc. The Sigma Designs logo is a registered trademark and ReelMagic is a trademark of Sigma Designs, Inc. All other brand names and products are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders

COHORT II

Category: War Game

Publisher: Impressions

Developer: Impressions

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
PC Compatible	386/16Mhz or faster
640K RAM	Mouse
Hard Drive	AdLib, Sound Blaster, or compatible sound cards
DOS 3.0 or higher	
VGA	

At the height of the Roman empire, warfare was dominated by larger-than-life personalities like Caesar, Fabius, Hannibal, and Pyrrhus, fighting epoch-making battles at Cannae, Alesia, Pharsalus, Trebia, and over most of Europe. The main unit of combat directed by these legendary tacticians was the cohort, consisting of light, medium, and heavy infantry and calvary in massed lines. Cohorts were more unified, larger, and better drilled than their predecessors (manipular and phalanx), allowing for more flexible maneuvers.

T. LIAM MCDONALD

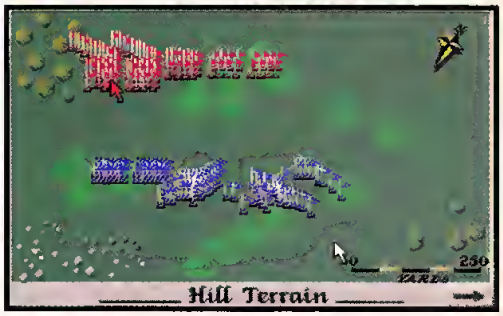


This is the unit of combat on which Impressions has based its latest war game, *Cohort II*. *Cohort II* is a vast improvement over its predecessor, *Fighting For Rome*, thanks to a better interface, improved graphics, and the game's capability to be linked with Impressions' *Caesar*. But it's still a long way from being a satisfying game.

The problem lies in Impressions' Micro-Miniatures combat system, originally used in both *Fighting for Rome* and *Conquest of Japan*. In an attempt to create a real-time war game with the feel of miniatures-based board games — which use lead figures rather than flat markers to represent units — Micro Miniatures represents troops with "three-dimensional" figures, with each possessing a certain degree of independent initiative. These rows of little men are then maneuvered into combat situations, where they fight — or retreat — on their own.



Because you choose the amounts and types of troops that make up the opposing armies (Romans versus barbarians or Romans versus Romans), there's a lot of variety in the confrontations in *Cohort II*. Troop selection is quite accurate, featuring mobile but unarmored light units; heavily armored, slow-moving heavy units; and lethal medium units. Archers hang in the back spraying the field with bursts of projectiles, while other units butt heads with the enemy in a seemingly mindless clash of wills. The battles are fought on several types of terrain that effect movement and speed (but not combat, as least as far as I could tell). Unit formations can be changed to various lines, blocks, or squares, and the speed of attack can be varied from Stand to Charge.



One novel touch is the way that *Cohort II* links up with *Caesar*. When you come to a conflict in *Caesar*, there's an option to switch to *Cohort II* and fight the battle in detailed fashion, then drop right back to the original game.

But *Cohort II* is severely hampered by its flat graphics, and massed juggernauts of men make controlling movement and distinguishing units nearly impossible. Combat quickly decays into a confusing free-for-all as troops begin to overlap on the screen; the only way to judge losses are by squeaky moans of death and the rapidly decreasing numbers of men.

A series of icons gives some indication of troop strength and morale, but by the time you figure out who is at what strength, the real-time combat has rolled over your forces and ground them into mulch. The narrow tactical display makes keeping track of troops very difficult, while the larger strategic map display is almost useless because of its lack of detail. The game quickly becomes a matter of scrolling across a large territory, tracking various engagements, and trying to pull your engaged forces back into a new formation and launch a fresh attack. Since troops often seem very reluctant to disengage the enemy, however, this tactic is practically impossible to perform, and you wind up simply awaiting the outcome of the battle.

Impressions scores an A for effort in their attempt to bring three-dimensional war-gaming to the PC, but both graphics and unit control need improvement before the Micro Miniatures system becomes a success.

Impressions, 222 Third Street, Suite 0234, Cambridge MA 02142

Subscribe Now!

CD-ROM Today

The Magazine of Personal Multimedia



YOUR SUBSCRIPTION GIVES YOU...

Clear, accurate hardware news and information

Knowledgeable, well-written software reviews

Easily understood, consumer-oriented buyer's guides

The latest news on trends, CD-ROM technology, and upcoming products

Behind-the-scenes feature articles on manufacturers, developers, and publishers

IN EACH ISSUE...

- **Special Feature Articles:** How to get the most from your multimedia computer
- **Hands-On Hardware Reviews:** News, reviews, and buyer's guides for CD-ROM systems, upgrade kits, and related equipment
- **Large Software Reviews Section:** Knowledgeable assessments of entertainment, education, reference, arts, and productivity software on CD-ROM
- **Annual "ROMMIE" Awards:** Best multimedia hardware and software of the year

CD-ROM Today
The Magazine of Personal Multimedia

CHARTER SUBSCRIPTION ORDER

☑ YES! Enter my one-year (6-issue) subscription to *CD-ROM Today* at this special Charter Subscription Rate of only $14.95, nearly **37% OFF** the regular newsstand price.

❑ Please bill me.

❑ My check enclosed. ❑ VISA ❑ MasterCard ❑ American Express

Credit Card #_____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip_____

First issue mailed within 6-12 weeks.

Mail coupon to:
CD-ROM Today • Subscription Department
P.O. Box 54163 • Boulder, CO 80322-4163
Single copy newsstand price of CD-ROM Today is $3 95 Canada $22.42 US$ Foreign $26.95 US$

NHL HOCKEY

Category: Sports Simulation

Publisher: Electronic Arts

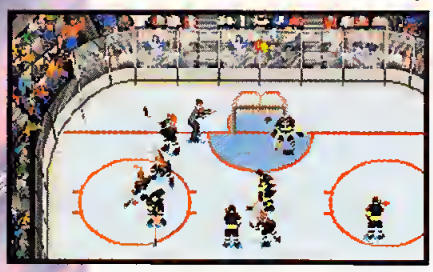
Developer: Electronic Arts

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386/33 MHZ 3 MB RAM Hard Drive DOS 5.0 or higher VGA	486/33 MHz Sound board with digitized speech capability Gamepad or joystick

As Los Angeles Kings' fans discovered last spring, ice hockey is the fastest, most action-packed, and perhaps most intense team sport of all. True, the game has an image problem, first because fights are a regular part of the game, and second because the National Hockey League has actually admitted a team called the Mighty Ducks (can you imagine Major League Baseball giving the go-ahead to the Indianapolis Bad News Bears?). But with the expansion of the NHL into regions of the U.S. once considered far too warm to have any interest in the sport—there's now a franchise in Texas, two in Florida, and three in California—hockey has a chance to make a whole slew of new fans.

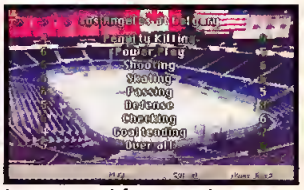
NEIL RANDALL



The cartridge-game publishers have provided more than their share of support for hockey, but hockey sims for the PC have been extremely rare. Fortunately, Bethesda's *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* (now up to version 3) provided early leadership in the field, so the quantitative absence hasn't been too important. Now, with the arrival of *NHL Hockey*, PC gamers have two excellent sims from which to choose.

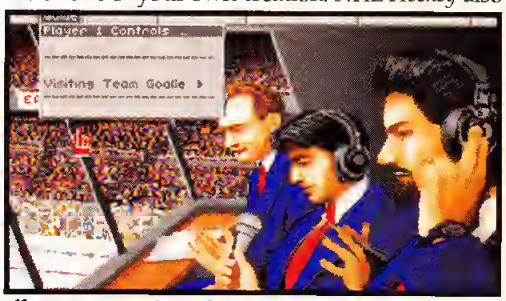
Actually, playing *NHL Hockey* is very similar to playing *Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3*. The overhead view of the rink is nearly identical, and the action in both games is strongly comparable. Some *Gretzy* fans, in fact, may think that *NHL Hockey* bears a suspicious resemblance to the Bethesda game, but the truth is that this is probably the best viewpoint for a hockey sim. The sideline views we see on television are designed to show the game's speed rather than its strategies, but seeing the game from above the ice lets the designers simulate more carefully.

And simulate is something *NHL Hockey* does well. A game between two defense-oriented teams like Montreal and Toronto will end up with a suitably low score, while a Detroit-L.A. clash will yield a realistic eight or nine goals or more. The designers have managed this by carefully working with the length of the game's three periods: a standard 20-minute period takes only 15 minutes or less of real time to play (including time-outs for face-offs), which means that each game minute is simulated by about 20 seconds of real time. The result is a two-fold success: a full game can be played in about a half-hour, yet you come away with the impression that you've played a complete hockey game.



Just as important, the artificial intelligence works well. Despite the way it may look at times, hockey is anything but a chaotic game, with a team's success relying about 80 percent on set formations and 20 percent on an individual player's inspirations (toss in a Gretzky or a Brett Hull and the split changes somewhat). *NHL Hockey*'s AI handles the formations, while its statistical depth makes it possible to differentiate between individual players and individual teams. If you let the computer control both teams, you can watch the plays develop and the individual players do their thing; even during power plays and penalty-killing situations, the players work the ice as they should.

All the NHL teams are here, complete with team and player stats for the '92-'93 season (the package also comes with the NHL's '92-'93 Official Guide and Record Book). You can play exhibition games or opt for a complete playoff series (last year's L.A.-Montreal Stanley Cup final is the default). Or, if you're extremely ambitious, you can play a complete season based on the '92-'93 schedule or one of your own creation. *NHL Hockey* also



allows you to alter player stats, trade players, and establish your own fantasy leagues if you wish.

Graphics are strong, with convincing plays and moves. Sound is excellent, with digitized speech during announcements and play and crowd noises that sound right. There's even the standard, cheesy-sounding arena organ during play stoppages. Announcer Ron Barr doesn't do as much announcing as he could, but that has little impact on the experience. *NHL Hockey* serves the sport well, and is a must-play for hockey fans who have the computing muscle (minimum 386/33 MHz, 3 MB RAM) to accommodate this impressive program.

Electronic Arts, 1450 Fashion Island Blvd., San Mateo CA 94404-2064

STREET FIGHTER II

Category: Martial Arts

Publisher: Capcom

Developer: Capcom

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386 or better 2 MB RAM, DOS 3.3 or higher, Hard drive VGA/MCGA	486DX/33 or faster Sound Blaster or compatible sound card Gamepad or joystick

TRENT WARD

For the past year or so, one game has ruled the cartridge-based video-gaming roost — *Street Fighter II*. This one- or two-player fighting game, which combines fierce action with subtle strategies, has been an incredible hit on the Super Nintendo, breaking all sorts of sales records for that system. And the Sega Genesis version—released a week before this issue went to the printer—is also expected to enjoy impressive sales.



With this sort of background, it seemed only a matter of time before an IBM version appeared, and I (a closet Super Nintendo fan) relished the thought of being able to get into some down-and-dirty combat on my PC. Unfortunately, it didn't take long for me to realize that this is a title that needs to stay on the cartridge machines.

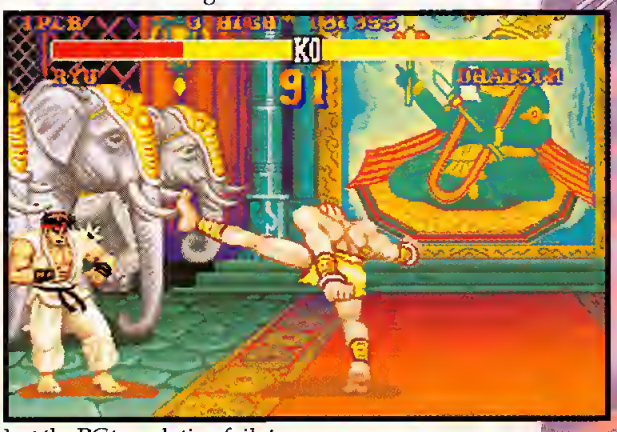
The first problem with this PC version is joystick control. The arcade and cartridge versions of this game have six buttons in addition to the directional pad or stick, making a perfect PC translation of the game impossible (at least until a manufacturer releases a six-button controller for the PC). I knew this before I fired up the game, but it didn't change the fact that the decreased number of controls really takes a lot out of the game play.

The arcade version of the game has three buttons apiece for kicks and punches, with each button determining the speed of the attack; the slower the punch or kick, the more damage it inflicts. This is a crucial aspect of the game, as a player must weigh the benefits of speed versus power. To attack at the different speeds in the PC version, however, requires an awkward combination of simultaneously positioning the joystick and pressing the universal punch or kick buttons, and it simply doesn't work well. You need intuitive control in this sort of intense, fast-paced game—or should I say in a game that's *supposed* to be fast-paced. The characters move dreadfully slow, even on a 486/50MHz. More on that later.



Then there's the audio. The music in the cart-based game is powerful, but in the PC version the music is flat and uninspiring. What made this so disappointing is the fact that the Sound Blaster is easily capable of re-creating the music of the original. What's more, the sound effects — another exciting element of the SNES version — never worked properly on my Sound Blaster 16; the effects could be heard through a Pro Audio Spectrum with Sound Blaster emulation, but they were accompanied by a white noise that sounded like a pair of eyeglasses being crushed in a blender. The documentation offered no clues as to why I was having sound problems, nor was there an option to let me try to remedy the situation by telling the program the DMA and IRQ settings for my sound card.

But the biggest problem with *Street Fighter II* is the on-screen action. All the characters jump much too high, and the ones who have extra jumping power sometimes leave the screen completely. The animation is very slow, leaving you feeling like you're playing a shadow of the original game, and there's a slight but noticeable lag between the time you push a button and when the character performs the action. Performing the secret moves is almost impossible, especially the ones that require the player to "hold away" for two seconds. I've been pulling off all the secret moves on the SNES for months now, but I was still unable to make any of them work in this version.



In short, the arcade and SNES versions of *Street Fighter II* are fantastic games, but the PC translation fails to capture any of the qualities that make them great. Any fan of the arcade or SNES game will be sorely disappointed by this weak offering, and gamers who play this version without having experienced the original will be left wondering just what the excitement is all about.

Capcom, 3303 Scott Boulevard, Santa Clara CA 95054

SLATER AND CHARLIE GO CAMPING

Category: Educational

Publisher: Sierra

Developer: Sierra

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
DOS — 286/16MHz 640K, EGA Windows — 386/16MHz, 2 MB of RAM Hard drive, VGA	386/16 MHz VGA Supported sound cards Mouse

TRENT WARD

Imagine a book that reads itself to your children; a book with infinite patience, that can help your children learn by pronouncing any word or phrase they point to. Couple this ability with animation and interactive exercises that keep the learning process fresh and enjoyable, and you've got a product that will grab and hold your children's attention.

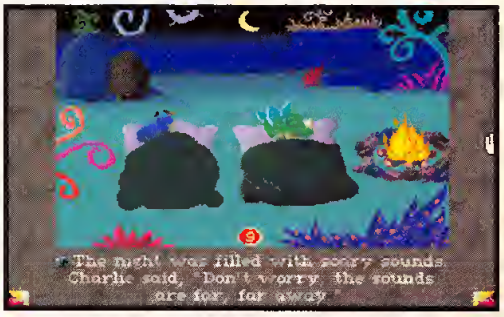
Sierra's *Slater and Charlie Go Camping* does all this, and more. *Slater and Charlie* not only helps children practice reading, but also makes that process fun and easy. And unlike other talking books, *Slater and Charlie* comes on floppy disks instead of CD-ROM, making it accessible to many more PC users.

Children can use the program in two different ways. The first, called Read to Me, performs as a talking book. As the text at the bottom of screen is read aloud by the computer, animated sequences show dinosaurs Charlie and Slater preparing for, then embarking on, a camping trip. Each word of text is highlighted as it's read, so children get used to seeing a word as well as hearing it pronounced. The computer will repeat any word you click on, and can also re-read the entire screen.



In the other mode, aptly called Play with Me, children can click on any of the objects they see on the screen to see a special animation sequence. Almost all of the objects in each screen feature animations, and in most cases the action actually expands on a part of the story that the original animation may not have shown.

The story (written by Bill Davis) begins with our heros Slater and Charlie excitedly admiring a poster of a camping vacation outside a sporting-goods store. They pack for their trip and head off for the mountains. But as the story progresses, the two friends discover that camping isn't quite as easy as they thought it would be. Slater, a tall blue dinosaur, seems particularly accident prone, while Charlie, a good-natured and often oblivious orange dinosaur, seems to do OK as long as he doesn't stand too close to Slater. The story itself doesn't have a heavy educational message, but it's funny and quite entertaining.



In Play with Me mode, children will have a great time helping Slater to learn important lessons by clicking on the different objects around him. My favorite scene was watching Slater fishing. With my help he caught a fish — and then a fish got Slater! A few of these extra animations were difficult to find, but that may be a good thing. By hiding some of the animations, a child has a greater chance of discovering something new each time he or she plays.



Probably the most impressive thing about *Slater and Charlie Go Camping*, though, is that it creates a true multimedia experience *without* the massive storage of CD-ROM. The entire story is narrated clearly, without breakup or static in the speech. The animation is very smooth, with graphics obviously designed to appeal to children. The interface is simple enough that even small children can explore without worrying if they've done something wrong. But perhaps most impressive of all is the way this technology is combined so effectively to entertain and educate. I definitely recommend it to any family with new or beginning readers. It's the kind of program that will provide hours of entertainment for adults and kids alike.



Sierra On-Line, P.O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614

BLOODSTONE: AN EPIC DWARVEN TALE

Category: Fantasy Role-Playing

Publisher: Mindcraft

Developer: Mindcraft

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
286/12 or better Hard drive 640K RAM VGA	Supported sound cards

NEIL RANDALL

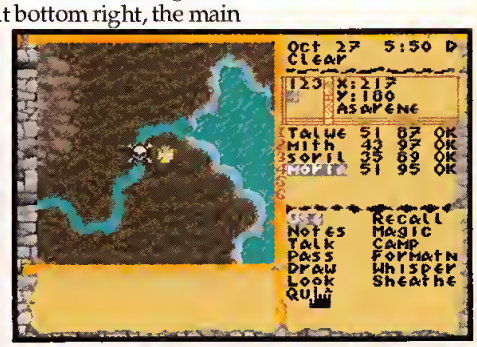
It may sound obvious, but games that require a high-powered 386 or 486 aren't necessarily better than those that run on 286s. And the fact is that many of us reading this magazine still have a 286, if not as our main machine then certainly as a supplemental one. That 286, with its perfectly fine VGA monitor, is still capable of some dandy game-playing.

Which makes a product like *Bloodstone* even more worthwhile. *Bloodstone*'s minimum requirements are a 12-MHz 286 and VGA graphics, and it plays quite well on such a system. Along with a few other concepts, this makes *Bloodstone* something of a throwback (which means it would have been state-of-the-art two years ago): but if solid, enjoyable, fast game-playing is one of your criterion for satisfaction, then *Bloodstone* is well worth a look.

If you've played any of the games in Mindcraft's Magic Candle series, you'll be able to get into *Bloodstone* immediately: It's based on the Magic Candle engine, with only minor enhancements. Then again, Magic Candle fanatics (there are quite a few) will tell you that the system doesn't need enhancements, that it's already the best FRP system on the market. Conversely, it's safe to say that players who don't like the Magic Candle games needn't bother with *Bloodstone*.

For those unfamiliar with the system, here's a quick rundown. *Bloodstone* offers an overhead perspective of your party, which consists of four adventurers. In the wilderness, the party is represented as a cross moving over a nicely detailed map; inside towns, temples, groves, camps, and other locations the oblique overhead perspective shows all four party members and anything else they come across. At first this perspective causes some annoyance during movement — sometimes you have to switch lead characters to get through tight gaps — but it's nothing you won't get used to quickly.

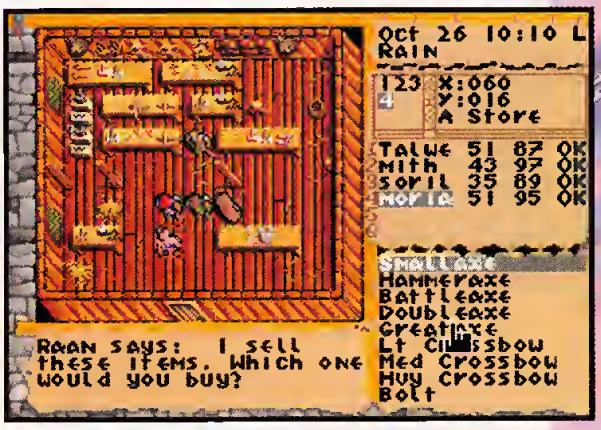
Below the main view is a small events window with text detailing what you've seen, what NPCs are saying to you, and so on. To the right are three status screens and, at bottom right, the main interface window. All the commands are here, including Talk, Magic, Camp, Formation, etc. Clicking on one with the mouse will usually reveal a submenu, and most of your actions are controlled in this way.



The story of *Bloodstone* takes place long before the events of *The Magic Candle*, at a time when feuding dwarves are in danger of being wiped out by taldors and other baddies. You are a courageous young dwarf looking for, among other things, the axe of power that will eliminate this strife. You must search the mainland and the islands, learning all sorts of things as you travel, and talking with everyone you can find to discover even more. Talking, in fact, is one of the game's crucial activities, because the locals know much more than you do, and their advice is often indispensable.



Bloodstone doesn't use real-time combat; each character attacks in turn, and you have as much time as you wish to figure out what to do. Although many gamers prefer real-time systems over this sort of phased combat, in general this is the more playable system for first-time adventurers, or for those who want a game they can play in short durations over a long period of time.



And it appears those are the two main groups for whom this game is designed. By their very nature, FRPs are complex and time-consuming, so it's important that a first-time FRP experience draws players in rather than alienates them. But even players thoroughly familiar with FRPs will find *Bloodstone* attractive, precisely because it's quick to get into and doesn't require hours of play for each session. This is a superb game for those half-hour periods between tasks or before bed, and the FRP genre doesn't have enough of those. *Bloodstone* isn't as graphically stunning as some of the high-end games designed for hot-rod PCs, but its storyline hooks you quickly and the friendly game play keeps you coming back. And that's what games are supposed to do.

Mindcraft, 2291 205th Street, Torrance CA 90501

THE LOST VIKINGS

Category: Action/Puzzle

Publisher: Interplay

Developer: Silicon & Synapse

Rating:

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386/SX 16 MHz	386DX/25 MHz
640K RAM	Supported Sound Cards
Hard disk	Gravis PC Gamepad
DOS 3.1 or higher	



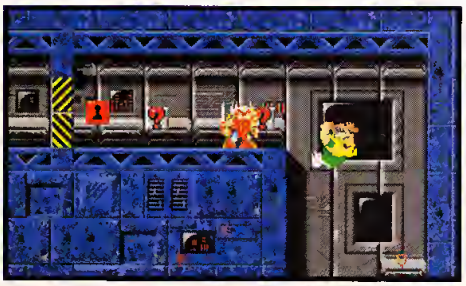
It obviously makes sense to learn from the experience of others. So it's no wonder that the enormously successful *Lemmings* should spawn similar products, such as Gametek's *Humans*. But while *Humans* shares *Lemmings'* basic "force the dumb critters to cooperate" premise, it used it as the basis for an otherwise original (and enjoyable) game.

BILLY R. MOON

With that in mind, let me begin by saying that *The Lost Vikings* does indeed reflect a *Lemmings*-esque heritage, with a bit of *Gobliins* thrown in. But like *Humans*, this game establishes itself as a unique and enjoyable product in its own right. This time around, the "dumb critters" in question are three Vikings who have been kidnapped by aliens. As they try to escape their otherworldly captors, they find themselves in different time periods, each presenting a unique set of challenges.



Complementing this goofy plot is a healthy dose of cornball humor — a component hyped in a back cover blurb promising that the Vikings will "come alive as they talk to each other in hysterical cartoon captions." Unfortunately, "hysterical" is a gross exaggeration; the humor here is more akin to what you'd see in a tired TV sitcom than the more sophisticated (and often warped) comedy of other PC games. Chances are you'll soon find yourself speeding through the dopey conversations that follow each level. It's the one part of the game that just doesn't work.



Like the three elves in *Gobliins*, each of the Vikings has predetermined skills. Faced with a puzzle in which you must reach a high platform? Just maneuver Erik the Swift, the leaper of the bunch, onto Olaf the Stout's shield for a boost up to the necessary spot. This cooperative approach gives *The Lost Vikings* a charm you won't find in single-character puzzle/arcade games like *Flashback* or *Out of This World*. It also means you've got to maneuver all three of the little fellows safely through each level, because you'll need them all to get past the next challenge. You only control one character at a time, so it's up to you to guide each to the exit. This often means covering the same ground several times. Fortunately, there are no time limits on any of the levels.



There's a fair dose of arcade action in *The Lost Vikings*, adding another dimension to game play. In many situations it's relatively easy to determine how to solve a problem, but getting past the slew of aliens in your way can be pretty tricky. This is liable to turn off some hard core puzzle fans, but I liked the added challenge. The action isn't overly difficult, and it seems appropriate.

The graphics are good, and all of the characters move smoothly and respond well to your commands. *The Lost Vikings* fully supports the Gravis PC GamePad — all the important actions each character performs can be accessed with one of the four buttons. If you're using a standard joystick, you'll also have to use the keyboard to control many important game functions; you're probably better off using the keyboard exclusively, since all the keystrokes are logical and easy to master.

The Lost Vikings can get a little repetitious at times, but on the whole it's very enjoyable. The well-designed mix of clever puzzles and colorful arcade action makes it worth the asking price.

Interplay Productians, 17922 Finch Avenue, Irvine CA 92714

In The New York City Of 2094, Giving Blood Isn't Voluntary.



MICROPROSE
SERIOUSLY FUN SOFTWARE

BLOODNET™
A CYBERPUNK GOTHIC

City streets can drain the life out of you. Especially when you're Ransom Stark, a human vampire surfing the edges of the cybernet.

Robbed of your soul by the vampire lord Van Helsing, the only way to win yourself back is by derailing his evil plan. Which means clashing with savage street gangs. Locating an Icebreaker program deep within the bizarre virtual reality of cyberspace. And battling bloodsucking vampires and stake-wielding vampire-hunters.

All in a desperate struggle to slay the vampire lord himself.

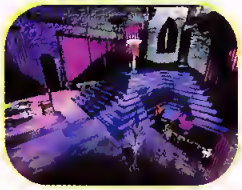
Time is running out. You're getting thirsty. And there's no turning back in the violent BloodNet.



•Recruit cyberpunks, deckers, rage gangers, mercenaries, and hackers to invade the global data network...and save New York City!



• Experience a breakthrough in computer role-playing with astonishing 3-D Hallucinographic™ art!



• Scour the darkness of New York for the secrets that will keep you alive!

To get our free catalog, call **1-800-879-PLAY.**
(Mon.- Fri., 8:30 am-5:00 pm EST.)
Or fill out the coupon and mail it to: MicroProse Software, Inc.
180 Lakefront Drive • Dept. D-10 • Hunt Valley, MD 21030-2245

Name _____

Address _____

City_____ State _____ Zip _____

SAS

© 1993 MicroProse Software, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Product Information Number 221

PICK-UP THE PHONE



AND PICK TWO GAMES FREE!



1-800-877-1995

Choose any Two Sierra Games when you switch to Sprint

Sprint long-distance service just became more valuable - up to $159.95 more! Now, when you switch your home long-distance service to Sprint, you can select any Sierra game, free! And after enjoying six months of high-quality long-distance, you'll receive a second Sierra game or one month of free long-distance service.*

Only Sprint can offer you a nationwide 100% digital, fiber optic network that provides the long-distance quality and reliability you need. Experience for yourself Sprint's "fiber optic" clarity that makes both your long-distance calls and PC data transmissions crystal clear and error free.

But unsurpassed call and data clarity is just one of the many benefits you will enjoy as a Sprint customer...

"The Most℠" A Unique Calling Plan

Sprint offers an unprecedented long-distance calling plan called "The Most℠" available now for all customers. The Most will save Sprint customers 20 percent on already low rates on their calls each month to whomever they talk to the most, including international calls–even if the called person is with a competitive long-distance carrier.

The Most will also provide automatic 20 percent discounts on all calls to Sprint's millions of customers, anytime and anywhere.

When the most frequently called number in a given month is a Sprint customer, Sprint will combine both discounts for an effective overall savings of 36 percent on calls to that number.**

Save on Long Distance When You're away from home too!

Sprint's FONCARD℠ travel card lets you continue to take advantage of clear calling and savings even when you're away from home. Plus the FONCARD is free, with cards available to every member of your family.

The Service You Deserve

At Sprint, we make no compromises when it comes to dependable, personal service - we do it all; operator services, directory assistance, customer service, even instant credit for wrong numbers. And we do it 24 hours a day!

No Risk Guarantee

Your satisfaction is guaranteed: we'll pick up the cost of switching your long distance to Sprint, and will even pay to switch you back if you are not completely satisfied. (Some restrictions apply.)

So why not sign up for Sprint and receive the clarity, savings and service you want while getting two Sierra games you enjoy?

Sprint®
SIERRA

* Offer valid only in the U.S. and for new Sprint customers. Not valid for FONCARD - only orders. Certain restrictions apply. Free month is up to $25 usage on 4th month invoice. To qualify for a second game or free month of long-distance the customer must bill $20 per month in 3 of the first 6 months.
** THE MOST discounts apply to intra-state calls only where authorized.

Product Information Number 109

YES!
Send me my one-year subscription right away!

GAME PLAYERS PC Entertainment

My six issues will cost only $14.95

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

☐ Payment Enclosed (Make check payable to GAME PLAYERS)

Charge: ☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ AmEx ☐ Send Bill

Card# _____ Exp. _____

Canada $22.42 US $ (includes GST). Other foreign: $26.95 US $.
First issue mailed within 6 weeks

4PPZ5

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 1035 PITTSFIELD, MA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

GAME PLAYERS PC Entertainment
P O BOX 5014
PITTSFIELD MA 01203-9418

GAME PLAYERS PC Entertainment

Issue: Nov/Dec 1993
Card Expires: February 28, 1994

MAIL TODAY!

FAST! FREE! PRODUCT INFO!

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Address _____ Phone (___) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

CIRCLE Product Information Numbers!

100	108	116	124	132	140	149	157	165	173	181	189	197	205	213	221	230	238
101	109	117	125	133	141	150	158	166	174	182	190	198	206	214	223	231	239
102	110	118	126	134	142	151	159	167	175	183	191	199	207	215	224	232	240
103	111	119	127	135	143	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	225	233	241
104	112	120	128	136	144	153	161	169	177	185	193	201	209	217	226	234	242
105	113	121	129	137	145	154	162	170	178	186	194	202	210	218	227	235	243
106	114	122	130	138	147	155	163	171	179	187	195	203	211	219	228	236	244
107	115	123	131	139	148	156	164	172	180	188	196	204	212	220	229	237	245

☐ Please send me one year of GAME PLAYERS PC ENTERTAINMENT, (6 issues), for only $14.95 and bill me.

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 1149 BOULDER, CO

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

GAME PLAYERS PC Entertainment
P.O. BOX 51199
BOULDER, CO 80323-1199

RetroMags

Our goal is to preserve classic video game magazines so that they are not lost permanently.

People interested in helping out in any capacity, please visit us at www.retromags.com.

No profit is made from these scans, nor do we offer anything available from the publishers themselves.

If you come across anyone selling releases from this site, please do not support them and do let us know.

Thank you!

